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A

RATIONAL

OF THE

Ritual

OF THE

HEBREW WORSHIP;

IN WHICH

THE WISE DESIGNS AND USEFULNESS OF THAT RITUAL ARE EXPLAINED,

AND

VINDICATED FROM OBJECTIONS.

BY MOSES LOWMAN.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed by S. Gosnell, Little Queen Street,

FOR OGLES, DUNCAN, AND COCHRAN, 57, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 295, HOLBORN; J. OGLE, EDINBURGH; M. OGLE, GLASGOW; AND T. JOHNSTON, DUBLIN.

1816.

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TO

SIR JOHN HARTOPP, BART.

SIR,

I BEG leave to inscribe the following Treatise to your name, not in the formality of a dedication, but as a real expression of esteem and gratitude; and in some hope it may be a present, not altogether unacceptable to you, either on account of the argument, or of the author.

Your hearty affection for the Christian Revelation will make you sensible of the high importance of supporting the Mosaical Revelation, as the reference they have to each other is so great, that the authority of both must stand or fall toge-

ther. It will be some satisfaction to a mind so well formed as yours, to a love of truth, to perceive the reasons and the uses of the Hebrew ritual of worship appearing in the harmony of all its parts; that the ritual itself is so far from showing any marks of superstition, that, on the contrary, it every where shows a wise and good design to prevent all superstition and idolatry, and to promote the useful ends of a revelation every way worthy of God. An honest attempt to serve so good a cause, will, I am sure, meet with your favourable acceptance.

For myself, Sir, I have always esteemed it a singular happiness of my life, that I was honoured, in my early years, with the acquaintance of that excellent gentleman, the late Sir John Hartopp, your father; and that you have continued the honour of your friendship to me, for so many years since.

And I please myself with the hopes that you will accept, with your usual goodness, what I now humbly offer to you, with my best wishes for your best prosperity and happiness.

In particular, that virtue and piety may long continue to be, as they have long been, the honours of the Hartopp family, is the hearty prayer of,

Sir,

Your most faithful,

Humble Servant,

MOSES LOWMAN.

TO THE READER.

THE following Discourse is designed in defence of our common Christianity, by vindicating the wisdom and goodness of the Mosaical Revelation.

I have seen, with pleasure, many things written in the same cause of Christianity, by men of distinguished abilities, sufficient, one would think, to convince all fair inquirers after truth.

Yet still the opposition is carried on, in particular against the ceremonial laws of the Hebrew church, which God appointed by Moses. They are reflected upon with unwarrantable confidence, as unworthy of God, hurtful to true religion, tending even to establish superstition on the ruins of moral virtue and goodness. They know well, such reflections on

Moses and the Prophets, must fall at last on Christ and his Apostles.

These reflections on the Hebrew ritual are likely to do the more mischief, by staggering the minds of many, who having little or no understanding in the wise reasons and proper uses of these laws, are unprovided with a ready answer to them.

This is a subject that has not been so fully considered, and set in so clear a light, as, I think, it deserves, and the cause of Christianity seems to require.

For a right understanding of the Mosaical ritual requires some knowledge of the rites themselves, together with some understanding of the ends, designs, real advantages, and uses of them. For these are the proper proofs of their wisdom and goodness, the proper reasons and motives for approbation and esteem.

It was necessary, then, to such a vindication, to set before you a full plan of

the ritual itself, that the true reasons and uses of the whole might appear in the harmony of all the several parts, centring in one view to promote virtue and true religion in the fear of Jehovah, and the worship of him as the one true God, the Holy One of Israel.

It was also necessary to leave nothing out of the plan of the ritual which might leave any room for complaint, that some of the weaker and more exceptionable parts of the ritual were concealed and rather sheltered under cover, than vindicated. I have therefore endeavoured to draw up a plan of the ritual in such a method, as I conceive may help to an easier and clearer understanding of the Hebrew worship itself, and give a fuller account of the wisdom and usefulness of it.

This is a knowledge of a very considerable part of Divine revelation, and of more necessary use than is generally apprehended.

It is of good service to explain the language of the Apostles, to show the nature of their reasonings, and point out the true force of their arguments, and even to explain the doctrines of the Christian faith in many articles, by showing how they were taught by Moses and the Prophets many ages before.

For these reasons, though the Plan of the Ritual may be thought long, I hope it will not be accounted tedious.

I have carefully endeavoured not to indulge fancy and imagination, and not to force allegory and metaphor to speak what it was never intended they should mean; being very sensible, fancy and imagination, how pretty, how ingenious soever, are neither reasons nor arguments, therefore are not to be given or taken as such.

This is an argument in which men are not commonly well versed: arguments concerning rituals are not usually so plain, as arguments on moral subjects. It will

require, therefore, some attention; yet I hope few persons who are honestly desirous to understand it, will find it too hard to be understood.

It may be proper here to make one remark concerning the nature of this argument. If it shall appear I have proved the reasons and uses I have assigned for the Hebrew ritual, to have been the true reasons on which it was formed, and the real use it was actually of, it will strongly confirm the wisdom and goodness of the whole, and be a sufficient answer to objections against any particular rites, considered separately and by themselves, only because a man may not see a particular reason for such a particular constitution. Nor do I conceive what can invalidate this evidence but what shall plainly prove, that the plan of the Hebrew ritual was not formed by these wise designs, or that in its use it was not fitted to answer them.

I heartily wish men would be persuaded to consider this very important and concerning question with due attention

and impartiality. Unattention, prejudice, jest, and raillery, are far from the way of finding the truth in any question whatsoever. It will be very hard to reconcile such a behaviour, either to a profession of seeking the truth, or to a sincere love of truth.

I shall rejoice if this Discourse shall be any ways serviceable to settle men's minds in a better understanding of the revelations of God to the church, or improve their esteem for the last and most perfect revelation of God, by his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, as teaching the best wisdom, and most fully answering the highest ends of religion, the glory of God in the happiness of mankind.

A

RATIONAL

OF THE

CEREMONIAL LAWS OF MOSES;

OR,

THE REASONS FOR APPOINTING THE RITES OF THE HEBREW WORSHIP EXPLAINED.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

Study of the Hebrew ritual recommended from its antiquity and use.

THE rites and constitutions of the Hebrew worship are recommended to our consideration, as well deserving our care to understand them, and our esteem, when we shall perceive the great wisdom of their appointment, and benefit of their use. They are constitutions of very early antiquity, and have continued longer than any form of religious worship in the world, from the days of Moses to the time they were perfected in the Christian worship designed to succeed them. These rites of worship were given to a favoured people, whom God had delivered in a

wonderful manner from a state of slavery in Egypt, and brought into the land promised to their fathers. They were given to the Hebrews, as the seed of Abraham, when they were to be settled in the Land of Promise, in order to preserve the knowledge and worship of Jehovah, the one true God, in opposition to the general corruption of the world by idolatry, and to continue the worship of the true church, till God should raise up a greater Prophet than Moses, and bless the church with a more perfect revelation by the Messias.

Many views of wisdom and goodness are opened by these constitutions of worship, as they answer many useful ends; not only the general end of all true religion, as the best wisdom raised to its highest perfection, viz. the glory of God in the happiness of the creature, but as they direct very wise and proper means to attain it, the most wise and proper for the time and circumstances. It will be a principle sufficient to silence the little cavils which a weak understanding, and small knowledge in such questions as these, or prejudices against every thing that claims the authority of a revelation, may rise against the rites and ceremonies of the Hebrew church, to observe the true reasons of their appointment, and the great usefulness of them to the best ends of true religion. Whoever

shall perceive these reasons, may allow the recommendation of Moses to be very just: *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it; keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people; for what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before thee this day?* Deut. iv. 5—8.

The most learned and judicious Hebrew doctor, Maimonides, extends this observation to all the laws of Moses, and very properly takes notice, they are all wise and useful, either to confirm the belief of some profitable doctrine, or to root out some evil principle; either to settle some good orders, or to take away iniquity; to excite to honourable and virtuous actions, or to exhort against what is vicious and base; so that the whole law is useful to teach doctrines, directing civil and political actions or truths to be believed, or moral conduct; and these three heads are sufficient reasons for these constitutions *.

* Omnia illa, quod Lex vel præcipit vel prohibet,

Not designed for a perfect state of religion.

Yet as much as the Mosaical ritual may be recommended for its wisdom and usefulness, its divine original and authority, we are to observe, it was not intended to be a perfect state of religion: in particular, with respect to the state of religion under the Messias, the Hebrew ritual was imperfect; so that the Apostle observes the *weakness* and *unprofitableness* of it, and that the law made *nothing perfect*, but *the bringing in of a better hope did.* So the Apostle styles these rites, though ordinances of divine service, yet a *worldly sanctuary*, and *carnal ordinances imposed on them, until the time of reformation.* So that the Hebrew ceremonial, however wise and useful in answering many good ends of that state, or economy of religion, ought not to be considered as perfect, especially in comparison of a more perfect state promised, and looked for, when the Messias should come. Thus we shall understand the Prophet, when he says in God's name, *Wherefore I gave them statutes also that were not good.* Not that they answered no good ends, for they did answer many wise and useful ends; but that they were not in themselves proper virtue, or the proper moral perfection and happiness of the

Heb. vii. 18. ασθενες και ανωφελες. and 19.

Heb. ix. 1. 10.

Ezek. xx. 25. חקים לא טובים

contineant vel doctrinas de actionibus vel civilibus et politicis, vel de rebus credendis, vel de moribus, ac proinde sufficiant nobis hæc tria capita, in reddendis præceptorum causis. *Maimon. Mor. Neboc.* Part III. c. xxxi.

spirit, which is more strictly goodness in itself. They were only good, as intermediate means to attain this good.

It seems necessary to premise this, to prevent mistakes: there is an imperfection, as well as a wisdom, to be observed in this constitution; and the imperfection itself, we shall hereafter see, is a wise and useful part of the constitution. It is with great injustice men take the liberty to treat the whole ritual with contempt, because it is a carnal commandment; and it is observed, in some sense, to be weak and unprofitable, when yet it was worthy the wisdom and the goodness of God, to appoint it the worship of the church for many hundred years, as preparatory to a better and more perfect worship of the church at the coming of the Messias.

It is also a great mistake some have fallen into, as to the true goodness and use of such a ritual, as if no constitutions of religious worship can come from God, but what are on all accounts the best, and most perfect. But men often argue very weakly from such general maxims, that whatever is the work of God must be most perfect; as if God was a necessary agent, and must in all possible cases act of necessity, to the utmost of infinite power and goodness, without a freedom of choice to act according to wisdom, in works of various kinds, and therefore of different degrees

of perfection. It is most evident there is an error in such a way of reasoning somewhere, though we should not be able to point it out in particular; forasmuch as what is contrary to constant experience and indisputable facts, cannot be true: no metaphysical reasonings, however plausible, can prove, that what has been, and certainly now is, cannot possibly be. Now, the very same experience that shows the wisdom of God in acts of various kinds, that he manifests his goodness in very different manners, and different degrees of perfection and happiness, in the infinitely different orders of beings, must show it is no ways inconsistent with the divine perfections of almighty power and infinite goodness, to do in his works of grace what he constantly does in his works of providence. The history and experience of all ages confirms the truth of this observation, and the real constitution of the Hebrew state and church is a most evident instance of it.

We ought, then, to be satisfied with such perfection as sufficiently answers the design and intention of such a ritual. We are not ourselves to form designs from our own imagination, and then quarrel with a constitution, as not becoming the wisdom or goodness of God, because it does not answer our imagination; though it does fully answer the designs the wisdom and

goodness of God had in choosing and appointing it. If ever we hope to attain a knowledge of the true reasons of things, it must be by considering things as they are, not as they are not, in what manner soever we may imagine they ought to have been. Let a man first satisfy himself in the reasons why the infinite goodness of God permits so much moral and natural evil in the world, so long corruption of true religion natural and revealed, and he will, I believe, easily satisfy himself of the wisdom and goodness wherewith God spake unto the world, at sundry times, and in divers manners. A revelation in different parts and forms could not be one and the same, nor therefore have just the same degrees of perfection; nor did the wisdom of God make it either necessary or fit it should be so; or is there any reason a revelation to different persons at different times, for different reasons, to Adam suppose, or Noah, to Abraham or Moses, must necessarily be one and the same? The true case is, the wisdom of God directs the revelation of such truths, or the giving of such laws, as are best suited to answer the particular designs of his goodness, whatever they may be. These, in reason and in fact, appear in general to be, a design of some good to the world, suited to its circumstances, and the state of religion in it. Take the revelation to

Heb. i. 1. πωλυμερως και πολυτροπως.

Noah, see the state of the world, and you perceive the true reason of the revelation: to warn the world of an approaching punishment, to preserve Noah and his family to repeople the world after that evil generation was destroyed in the flood, God sent Noah, a preacher of righteousness, directing him to build an ark for his preservation. This was a wise intention, and a revelation that fully answered that intention, though it was not, as it never was designed to be, a full and perfect revelation of all truths of religion, or a complete direction for every part of religious worship.

To perceive, then, the true and wise reasons of the Hebrew revelation, we must carefully consider what ends were designed to be answered by it. What these were, we shall best learn by considering the true state of the world, and of the Hebrew nation, when the law was given by Moses.

State of the world, and of religion, when this law was given to the Hebrews.

Not to divert from the subject, I shall not here inquire into the antiquity of idolatrous rites, or the original of idolatrous principles. The Hebrew history sufficiently shows, that at the time the law was given by Moses, idolatry and idolatrous rites had almost corrupted the whole earth, in particular the Egyptians, Canaanites, Midianites, Moabites, and all the nations neighbours to the Land of Promise; so

that the Hebrews were in very great danger of losing the knowledge of the one true God, and of falling into the evil customs and idolatrous rites of their neighbours. While Israel abode in Shittim, the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab; *and they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bow down to their gods: and Israel joined himself to Baal-Peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.* Numb. xxv. 1, 2, 3.

Idolatry had so far prevailed in those times, that they offered their children to Moloch, and, by a barbarous and inhuman rite as an act of religion, violated all the duties of true religion; yet these abominable practices of the nations seem in a manner authorized by constitution, as if they were not only allowed by custom, but directed by some command. *After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you, shall ye not do, neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.* The word in the original properly signifies, some constitution, as a law directing a thing to be done. And indeed nothing but a pretence to some direction of sacred authority could so much as excuse actions so contrary to all natural and moral principles. But by such pretended constitutions they could allow Levit. xviii. Levit. xviii. 3. בחקתיהם

and recommend incestuous marriages, with the sacrificing of children. "The magi-
Prideaux Connect. Part I. l. iv. p. m. 226. "cians went so far, not only to allow a "man to marry his sister and his daugh-"ter, but also his mother. It went so far "with that sect in practice, that in the sa-"cerdotal tribe, he who was born of this "last and worst sort of incest, was looked "upon as the best qualified for the sacer-"dotal function, none being esteemed by "them more proper for the highest sta-"tions in it, than they who were born of "mothers who conceived them of their "own sons." The Locrenses could be
Justin, l. iii. s. 21. brought by such evil principles even to make a vow, if they were conquerors in a war in which they were engaged, they would prostitute their virgins in the festi-
Strabo, l. viii. p. m. 261. vals of Venus. And Strabo mentions a temple of Venus, in which more than a thousand lewd women were consecrated to debauchery *.

It is not to be wondered at, that idolatry had taken so deep root in the days of Moses, as it had been of so long continuance; it had been as old as the days of Terah the father of Abraham; so Joshua informed the people. *And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God*

* Herodotus informs us, it was an established custom among the Babylonians, that their virgins, of what quality soever, were obliged to prostitute themselves once before they could marry, to the first person who offered them money.—*Herodotus*, l. i. c. 199.

of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood, in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods. He exhorts, therefore, to great caution in their worship, that they remove every kind of idolatry, whether of the Egyptians or of their fathers. *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord,* or worship only Jehovah, the one true God. Joshua, xxiv. 2. 14.

When Jehovah commanded Abraham to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house, it was with design to make his family a separate people, to preserve them from the infection of idolatrous principles and practices, so generally prevailing, that it had got even into his father's house. It continued in the family of Laban; so that when Jacob left him to return to Canaan, Rachel was tempted to steal her father's images, or his gods. And even in Jacob's own family idolatry seems to have made advances; for he gave a command to his household, and to all that were with him, *Put away the strange gods that are among you;* and accordingly they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands, all the images or Te- Gen. xii. 1. Gen. xxxi. 19—30. Gen. xxxv. 2—4.

raphim which they had for divination, or other acts of idolatry.

The Egyptians, with whom the Hebrews had lived for a long time, had run into the most ridiculous superstitions and extravagancies of magical rites. The Hebrews were accustomed to see them; and it was an easy matter to reconcile their minds to the customs of a people at that time highly in esteem, above all other nations, for their power and their wisdom, and whom they had looked upon as their masters for many years. Besides, a natural inclination to the knowledge of things future, and desires of temporal prosperity and happiness, might easily recommend to their own use what their wise masters the Egyptians used as oracles for divination, and for obtaining health, long life, victory, fruitful seasons, with plentiful harvests, and such other blessings as they imagined were the gifts of those idols they worshipped as guardians of mortal men: whether they hoped for these gifts from the intelligences supposed to inhabit and govern the sun, the moon, and the other stars, or from the dæmons, and departed spirits of their kings and benefactors, now after death advanced to greater powers, and appointed by the superior intelligences their deputy-guardians of mortal men, whence they were honoured by the name of the stars, and the stars were honoured by the honour

given to their deputies. Thus, the sun and moon might be worshipped through Baal and Astarte, Osiris and Isis, though they were only men and women in life, but deified after death, and constituted principal agents for the intelligences of the sun and moon in this lower earth, and to dispense their blessings among men. The Hebrews were certainly very ready to fall in with these customs, and to receive these principles. Their forwardness in making a golden calf, and joining themselves to Baal-Phegor, evidently show that the Hebrew nation was as like to be corrupted with idolatry as any other people; that they were to be preserved from it with great care and proper constitutions. General commands, directions, exhortations, were found in experience not to be effectual preservatives. Something further was highly requisite, and even necessary, in such a state of the world.

Particular state of the Hebrews as the family of Abraham.

You will perceive it proper, in the view before us, to consider the particular state of the Hebrew nation, as well as the state of the world in general, when the Mosaical laws were given. The children of Israel are to be considered as the family of Abraham, which God had chosen for a peculiar people, to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and to receive the blessings God had promised in his covenant with Abraham their father,

and with his seed after him. When God called Abraham from his father's house, he promised him, *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* In this covenant and promise there is a temporal blessing mentioned, that God would make Abraham's family a great nation, including that God would give unto them the Land of Promise. But besides this covenant of temporal blessings, there appear plainly a covenant, and promises of an higher and different nature; for Abraham was not only to be the father of a numerous family, and a prosperous nation, but in him, and his seed, all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

Gen. xii. 2, 3.

"This covenant," as a great author observes, "limited to Abraham, and his "chosen seed, most evidently regarded the "whole race of men, and was to grow "in the fulness of time into a blessing "upon all the nations of the earth; he "and his posterity, as the church of God, "were depositaries of this hope. Now, "as two covenants were given to Abra-"ham and to his seed, one a temporal "covenant, to take place and be performed "in the land of Canaan; the other a "covenant of better hope, to be per-

"formed in a better country; so are the "prophecies given to Abraham, and to his "children after him, of two kinds; one "relative to the temporal covenant, and "given in discharge and execution of "God's temporal promises; the other re- "lative to the spiritual covenant, given "to confirm and establish their hopes of "futurity, and to prepare and make ready "the people for the reception of the king- "dom of God." Bp. Sherlock on Prophecy, p. 134.

From this circumstance of the covenants between Abraham and his seed we have reason to conclude, that the laws given by Moses to this people had a particular regard to them as the holy seed of Abraham, that they would therefore have a regard to both these covenants, and teach the hopes and obligations of both; or, as the forementioned judicious author observes, "Now, if Abraham and his posterity "were chosen not merely for their own "sakes, or out of any partial views and re- "gards towards them, but to be instru- "ments in the hands of God for bringing "about great designs in the world; if the "temporal covenant was given for the "sake of the everlasting covenant, and "to be subservient to the introduction of "it; it is highly probable, that all parts of "the Jewish dispensation were adapted to "serve the same end, and that the law "founded on the temporal covenant was Vid. 13. Id. ib. p. 168.

" intended, as the temporal covenant itself " was, to prepare the way to better pro- " mises, to contain the figure and image " of good things to come."

Such seems to be the state of the world, and of the church, when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and gave them possession of the promised land, and appointed them laws by Moses best suited to this intermediate state of religion, till all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the seed of Abraham, and the kingdom of the Messias.

From this view of the state of the world, and of religion, and of the Hebrew nation, you perceive that some new laws, some further constitutions of worship, would be very proper and useful in those times, and for that people, to maintain the knowledge of the one true God, to preserve the purity of religious worship, and to keep up the hope of the promises and covenant with Abraham until they should be accomplished, and all nations should be blessed in the Messias. When God entered into covenant with Abraham and his seed, there was a new rite added to the patriarchal worship. God appointed a visible mark, as a seal of a covenant between himself and Abraham; and God said unto Abraham, *Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is*

the covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 11.

Yet how fit soever such a visible mark might be, to keep in remembrance the covenant between God and the family of Abraham, it was found, in experience, insufficient to preserve them from the idolatrous customs of their neighbours. They fell into a disuse even of circumcision itself, as the seal of their covenant; Moses's own children were not circumcised, till an angel showed him his fault; and Zipporah seemed to express her dislike of the use of the rite itself. Then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision. While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, *this seal* of the covenant was omitted for a long time; all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, *them they had not circumcised.* These Joshua was directed to circumcise, which he did at Gilgal; on which the Lord said unto Joshua, *This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.* Thus it appeared in fact, that circumcision was not sufficient to keep up the distinction of this people, and their separation from the world, to preserve the know- Exod. iv. 9, 10, 11. Joshua, v. 5. 9.

ledge and worship of the true God, the memory and hopes of the promises and covenant.

It appears, from these general considerations, every way fit and proper to answer the great end of religion; every way becoming the wisdom and goodness of God, agreeable to his promises, and covenant with Abraham, whom he had chosen to the honour and privileges of his church, to give this people a new body of laws, now they were entering into the Land of Promise, and the covenant of their temporal blessings was to be accomplished: a body of laws suitable to the designs for which they were chosen an holy nation and peculiar people, suitable to their character as Israelites. What such a body of laws should be, to show both the wisdom and goodness of God, well deserves an attentive and impartial inquiry.

PART I.

General Considerations, showing what Body of Laws was best suited to the State of the World, and of the Church, when the Law of Moses was given, and the Ritual of the Hebrew Worship established.

BEFORE this time, when it seemed fit to the wisdom of God to give a new law to the family of Abraham, the outward forms of religious worship were few, and they of plain and easy instruction. We have little account of any other form of outward worship among the patriarchs, than the use of sacrifices; of which there is very early mention in the days of Adam, and in the worship of Cain and Abel. The consecration of the sabbath, to preserve the memory of the creation, and of one true God, who made the heavens and the earth, may be considered as a day holy to Jehovah; and has been considered as the first and most ancient ritual, well fitting the state and worship of Paradise itself.

As to the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, they were the fruits of the ground, the first-lings of the flock, and of the fat thereof. Bishop Patrick observes, the Talmudists are of opinion, these sacrifices were whole burnt offerings, and that there were no

Gen. iv. 3, 4.

other before the law was given. He further observes, Cain and Abel seem to have offered these sacrifices themselves; and this particular, he adds, effectually confutes their opinion, who say, the first-born were separated to the office of priesthood; for, by these words, it is plain, the youngest sacrificed as well as the eldest; and so indeed they did in following ages.

As there is no express command to Adam, directing the form of worship by sacrifices, it has been a question, whether the worship of God by sacrifices had its original from particular divine institution, or from the reason of our first parents, choosing them as fit outward expressions of gratitude to God for his blessings, and an acknowledgment of our enjoyments in life, as his gifts, of hope in the continued goodness of God, for the continuance of our blessings, and expressing a sense of the holiness and justice of God, of the guilt of sin, and yet an hope in the mercies of God to forgive sins, and to bless those who shall return unto him with a truly humble and contrite heart.

The faith of Abel, as Bishop Patrick further observes, seems to have something else to warrant it, than barely his own reason; and therefore adds, Adam, in all likelihood, had received some order concerning it from the Schechinah. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that the coats of skins,

Gen. iii. 21.

which the Lord made for Adam and his wife, were made of the skins of those beasts, which, by his direction, were offered to himself as sacrifices.

Sacrifices seem, however, to have been continued in use from these most early times, and to have been the chief, if not the only forms of outward religion, in the days of the patriarchs. They well expressed the several parts of prayer. Thanksgiving, petition, and confession of sins, were proper actions, to excite the fear of God's justice, hope in his mercies, and thankfulness for his goodness. They were proper engagements to fear, honour, and serve God, which are the great principles of true religion in the heart.

It is to be observed, that, from the very beginning of religious worship, some outward actions were in use, such as sacrifices were, to make a visible profession of inward reverence, of the fear and love of God, of the desire and hope of his favour and blessing.

In the days of Abraham there was danger of applying these acts of worship to other beings besides the one true God. When men began to serve other gods, they soon began to acknowledge them as gods, by offering sacrifices to them also; there remained then no visible difference between the true worship of the true God, and the idolatrous worship of false gods;

therefore the covenant between God and Abraham was further confirmed by an additional rite of circumcision, a constant sensible mark of consecration to Jehovah, that they were not to forsake the worship of the true God, to worship other gods, and sacrifice to idols. But these rites already in use, being found insufficient to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God, it became the wisdom and goodness of God, to appoint new constitutions, which should more effectually obtain these ends; the wisdom of which will appear, by their fitness and usefulness to obtain them.

You will perceive, then, such laws, or ritual constitutions, will be most wisely directed, by the following reasons:

1. To answer the true ends of religion, in a manner best suited to these circumstances of the world, and the covenant of God with Abraham and his seed as his church.

2. To preserve this church from idolatry, by a sufficient provision against the great and many dangers of falling into it.

3. To answer both these ends, by such ritual constitution as should teach such moral instructions, such principles of religious reverence and obedience, as should promote the great ends of all true religion; such laws and rites as should exclude all

idolatrous rites, and cut off all pretences of introducing them into their own worship, which could keep up a just sense of their own privileges, as the seed of Abraham, and church of God, with the hope of the promises, and prepare them for that better state of the church to come, when all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the Messias.

CHAP. I.

Design to promote the Essentials of true Religion.

THE first design, then, of giving this law to Israel, you observe, is to give such instructions as should answer the general and principal ends of religion, in a manner best suited to these circumstances of the world, and to the covenant with Abraham and with his seed, or the Hebrew church.

Whoever shall consider the laws of Moses, and rites of the Hebrew worship, as enacted by the authority of Jehovah, and given for the use of the seed of Abraham, will easily conclude, they are such rules of religion, and such constitutions of worship, as are fit for the wisdom and goodness of God to choose and appoint for the use of a favoured people, called to be an holy nation to himself, who were to

serve and to worship him, in a manner more honourable than the other nations of the earth; in such manner as should promote the perfection and happiness of their own minds, in every part of true religion, or in all sobriety, righteousness and goodness, piety and godliness, that is, in every virtue, human, social, and divine. As true religion is the highest wisdom improved to its highest perfection, the glory of God in the happiness of his reasonable creatures, these virtues are essential to true religion in every form of it. Whatever differences there may be in other respects, between the externals of religion, as in the patriarchal, the Abrahamic, the Mosaical, or Christian dispensations, yet these essentials of religion are necessary to them all; and we may therefore expect to find them, as we really shall, in each of them. It has been remarked before, these ritual laws were not designed to be of equal perfection with the spiritual worship of the Christian dispensation; yet were they to have all the essentials of true religion, and by them we were to perceive and judge of their comparative goodness and excellency; for, though the numerous rites and ceremonies of the Hebrew church were in themselves burdens, and a carnal commandment, yet they were of great and even necessary use, in those times of corruption, to preserve the true faith of the

one true God, the reverence due to the only Creator and sole Governor of the world, to excite that gratitude they owed to Jehovah as their God, who blessed them with peculiar favour and grace, and to exhort that obedience which was due to him, not only as Lord of the whole world, but, in particular, as King of Israel and their Lord, as a people whom Jehovah had made a peculiar people unto himself, before and above all nations of the earth. Thus they exhorted a more especial care of obedience to those laws which were promulged with greater solemnity, and with marks of greater importance; such as the moral laws of the ten commands, published on Mount Sinai, and laid up in the ark, over which the glorious majesty of Jehovah, or the presence in the Schechinah, resided.

These essentials of religion, which are to have a place in every wise or true constitution of religion, must include a right knowledge of God, of his being, perfections, and government, a just sense of the reverence all men owe to God, from a firm belief of his being, power, dominion, justice, and goodness, and an hearty concern to obey the known will of God in all things; doing what is pleasing in his sight, seeking and hoping their perfection and happiness in the likeness and in the image of God. By these considerations,

then, the wisdom of a religious constitution will be chiefly determined, by inquiring how far is it designed, how far is it fitted, to give right and worthy notions of the being and perfections of God, of his government of the world, of the effects of his general providence, and of his particular providence, or grace; to give a right understanding of the obligations men are under to fear, reverence, honour, and obey God in all their actions; more especially by such inward temper and affections, as give the truest and the highest honour to God, as best improve their own minds in all virtue and goodness, after the highest pattern of perfection, the image of God himself; and finally, to give encouragement to this care, to make it constant and hearty, from a firm belief and expectation, that the justice and goodness of God will make him hate and punish all evil and wickedness, approve and reward all virtue and goodness. We perceive much of the comparative excellency of any particular, as it shall be more or less serviceable to these ends.

A noble author has singled out, and recommended these as principal truths of religion—that there is a God; that this Supreme God is to be worshipped; that virtue, joined with piety, is the principal part of divine worship (this he explains, a conformity of the several faculties and powers of the soul, to truth and reason; the same,

I suppose, as the philosopher's definition of virtue, *natura ad summum perducta*, nature raised to its full perfection). To these, he adds, there ought to be always in the mind, an horror of all vice and wickedness, exciting a care of repentance and reformation; and that these truths be strengthened with the belief and expectations of rewards and punishments. These principles of religion, he observes, arise from the common notions of conscience, philosophy, laws, and religion; and therefore may be accounted the articles of the true catholic church, which never fails, nor ever can: and speaking of these truths, under the name of *common principles*, he professes so high esteem for them, that he shall account that the best book, and the best religion, and him the best prophet, which shall direct the best observance of them *.

This observation of our noble author points out an excellent rule, which, when applied to the Mosaical laws, will show their real virtue and worth; and which we shall consider in its more proper place, after we have seen the plan of the ritual, and shall be instructed from itself, how it is to be applied. We shall then clearly perceive what sentiments it teaches concerning God,

* Notitiæ communes, quas adeo magni facimus ut qui proxime ad earum observantiam accesserit, optimum librum, religionem, prophetam dixerim.—*Baro Herbert de Cherbury de Verit.* 267.

most honourable to him, and most useful to perfect his worshippers in all virtue and goodness, righteousness and holiness, the great ends of religion; in which it will appear it greatly excelled every other institution of religion, except the Christian, which was to perfect it.

Particular view to suit the Hebrew laws of worship to the particular circumstances of the Abrahamic covenant.

But though this care of promoting the chief principles of all religion was a chief end in this, as it ought to be in every institution of religion, yet the particular circumstances of this people, and of the state of the world with respect to them, very much diversified this view. It was wise and fit to take this into consideration, as this was designed to be a constitution in aid of the Patriarchal and Abrahamic states of religion. The Hebrews were not to be considered as the world in general; but as the seed and family of Abraham, with whom God had many years before made a covenant. They had received circumcision, a seal of God's promise to them, as an holy nation, and a peculiar people, to whom, as such, he had promised peculiar protection, favour, and blessings; according to St. Paul, a seal of the righteousness by faith. This covenant with Abraham was to this effect: Jehovah appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, *I am the Almighty God, walk thou before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly.* The nature of

Rom. iv. 11.

Gen. xvii. 1, 2.

this covenant is further described; *And I will make thee exceeding fruitful; and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee; and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee; and I will give unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.* Gen. xvii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Before this, God had made a covenant with Abraham in terms somewhat different: *Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of this thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3.

In these promises there are some blessings peculiar to Abraham's own family, and some common to all the families of the earth. The blessing common to all the families of the earth is often repeated, to mark it for particular observation. *And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be*

Gen. xviii. 17, 18. *blessed in him?* Again, on Abraham's readiness to obey the command of God, to sacrifice his son, *an angel from heaven said* (in the name of God), *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies,* Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

The promises before you seem plainly to consist of two distinct parts, or rather, to use the words of a very learned and judicious author, "including two distinct "covenants; the one relating to the tem- Bp. Sherlock of Prophecy, p. 159. "poral state, and prosperity of his (Abra- "ham's) seed, in the land of Canaan; the "other, to the blessing, which, through "him and his seed, was to be conveyed to "all nations of the earth."

Laws of religious worship given to a people in such circumstances, would, in all likelihood, have some proper regard to them, and to the promises of their particular covenant, as well as the more general service of true religion. They were under peculiar obligations, had hopes of peculiar blessings, in the faithful performance of all the promises of the covenant made with Abraham their father. It is hardly to be

supposed, that a ritual of worship should be given to a nation in such circumstances, which should not preserve the memory of the blessings promised, the nature of the grant, the condition on which the grant was made, and what religious use was designed should be made of it; especially as such a memory of the blessings promised by the covenant, was so powerful a motive to gratitude and hope, to reverence and obedience.

"Now, this being the case," to use the words of the fore-mentioned author, "'tis "evident, that the promise of a blessing to "all nations subsisted in its full force and "vigour during the continuance of the "law of Moses; for, as that promise was "not completed by the giving of the "law, in which all nations were not con- "cerned, so neither could so general a "promise be annulled, or set aside, by a "private law given to one people only. "Hence, another question proper to be "considered, with respect to the state of "religion under the Jewish dispensation," as our author very justly observes, "is "this, how far the religion of the Jews "was preparatory to that new dispensa- "tion which was in due time to be re- "vealed, in accomplishment of the pro- "mises made to all nations. Now, if "Abraham and his posterity were chosen, "not merely for their own sakes, or out Id. ib. 162.

" of any partial views or regards towards
" them, but to be instruments in the hand
" of God for bringing about his great de-
" signs in the world; if the temporal cove-
" nant was given for the sake of the ever-
" lasting covenant, and to be subservient
" to the introduction of it; it is highly pro-
Vid. 6. " bable, that all parts of the Jewish dis-
" pensation were adapted to serve the same
" end; and that the law, founded on the
" temporal covenant, was intended, as the
" temporal covenant itself was, to prepare
" the way to better promises. If this ap-
" pears upon the whole to be a reasonable
" supposition, then have we a foundation
" to inquire into the meaning of the law;
" not merely as it is a literal command to
" the Jews, but as containing the figure
" and image of good things to come. It
" can hardly be supposed, that God in-
" tending finally to save the world by
" Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel,
" should give an intermediate law, which
" should have no respect nor relation to the
" covenant, which he intended to establish
Id. ib. " for ever. And whoever will be at the
164. " pains to consider seriously the whole ad-
" ministration of Providence together,
" from the beginning to the end, may see
" perhaps more reason than he imagines
" to allow of types and figures in the
" Jewish law."

The evidence and use of this important

observation plainly appear in the Epistle to the Hebrews. None can, I think, observe with any attention, how the rites of the Hebrew worship, as explained and applied to the Christian covenant, agree so surprisingly in every thing with it, but he must be persuaded with the Apostle, that they were designed to be figures, or, in the common expression, types of the good things to come.

It was then highly fit in itself, well becoming the wisdom of God, in forming a ritual of worship for the Hebrew church, to order it in such manner as should make it preparatory to another state of religion, which was to succeed, and perfect it. How many wise and good ends would this serve, to show the Hebrews their present constitution was not designed for the most perfect, but was to be perfected in a better covenant, that their ritual law was not to be perpetual, but should give way to another state of the church, truly universal and catholic; and yet, that their ritual was a figurative representation of the more perfect constitutions in the days of Messiah the King. Hence the Shechinah, temple, priesthood, altar, sacrifices, and other parts of the Hebrew ritual, will have a wise and useful design, as figures of a better Shechinah, temple, priest, altar, sacrifice, and blessings: an instruction of great benefit to both churches, the Hebrew and the

Christian, to teach them that their ritual, though very wise and good for them in their circumstances, was yet but preparatory to a better; for which, therefore, they were to hope and prepare, and to teach us how much the worship of the Christian church excels, and should be preferred to all that went before it, that we may be sensible of our obligation to God for his goodness, and our own happiness in so great a blessing.

CHAP. II.

Another great Design of the ritual Worship of the Hebrew Church was, to preserve it from Idolatry, and fence against the many Dangers of being corrupted by it.

Design of the ritual a guard against idolatry.

It was observed before, that idolatry had very much increased at the time when the law was given; that it was very likely to prevail among the Hebrews; that their distinction, as the family of Abraham, and the guard of circumcision, with all that they had learned of the faith of Abraham, as to the unity of God, and that no other gods were to be worshipped besides the only true God, were found insufficient to preserve this faith and worship pure among them. It was wise and proper then, in such a case, to guard more effectually

against so great dangers, as manifestly threatened the total and irrecoverable loss of the right knowledge and worship of the one true God, every where, since this family of Abraham was the only people that yet retained the profession of them. All other people had fallen into the principles as well as practices of idolatry, and into all the evils and wickedness which so usually attended them.

This circumstance called for a speedy and an effectual preservative, such as should be adequate to the danger. And since there were so many ways of tempting the Hebrews, and prevailing upon them, to fall in with the customs of their neighbours, it became the wisdom of a law given on such an occasion, to be a firm hedge, and secure fence, to preserve the faith of the church in Jehovah, as the only true God, and prevent the worship of any god besides him. As this was a view every way worthy the wisdom and goodness of God, it is also declared to be his intention expressly in giving the law; and actually appears to be an intention that runs through the whole law itself. In such a view, nothing that threatened any danger was to be overlooked, how little soever it may seem to be at first sight. It was necessary to make this provision effectual, to guard them by the rites of their worship, as well as by precepts, against

idolatry; to fence them against temptations and encouragements to join with their neighbours in any of their idolatrous customs, and to give an abhorrence of all idolatrous rites, or wicked ceremonies, which others esteemed sacred, and reverenced as acts of religion.

To be a preservative against idolatrous principles.

First, then, it appears wise to give the Hebrews a ritual, which would be a preservative against idolatrous principles; for idolaters had their principles, as well as other sects. They had drawn up a sort of philosophy, plausible in many things, and like to deceive many; such principles as, in after-times, made a considerable part of the speculations of the most renowned philosophers Pythagoras and Plato, as they were, before them, the chief doctrines of the Egyptian and Chaldæan theology, the secret and admired science of their wise men.

They believed, that, besides the one supreme God, there were many intellectual beings or spirits: a doctrine very true in itself, likely, taught by ancient and general tradition, countenanced and confirmed by the Hebrew revelations: but they, considering these spirits as of different perfection and different orders, considered them also as differently employed by the supreme God in the government of the world. This is the foundation of the distinction between the gods and their wor-

ship, in the Golden Verses of Pythagoras: "First, to worship the immortal gods, ac- "cording to their order; then, the illustri- "ous heroes; and after them, the earthly "dæmons. Thus they taught an higher, "a middle, and a lower order of intelli- "gences, or spirits. They taught all these "spirits were, by the will of God, which "they called their law and order, assigned "to proper stations, suitable to their supe- "riority or subordination to each other *." They supposed the spirits superior to human souls, a sort of intermediate beings between God and them, and as such appointed, by the will of God, mediators between himself and men: or, as Maimonides represents their doctrine, they who worship idols, worship them as mediators, or beings intermediate between God and them, having power to do good or evil to men †.

Our learned Dr. Hyde has given us a very judicious summary of these principles of idolatry, which it will be of great service, in this argument, to have before us.

"They acknowledged," he observes, "God the maker of the world and posses- "sor of heaven; but because of his so

* Νομος μεν, ὁ δημιουργικος νεὼς, καὶ ἡ θεια βουλησις.—Hierocles Carm. Pythagor. p. 18.

† Qui idola colunt, quasi mediatores, vel res intermedias, inter Deum et ipsos, ut benefaciendi vel malefaciendi virtutem habentes.—*Maimon. Mor. Neb.* P. I. c. xxxv. p. 54.

"great distance, and most reverend ma-
"jesty, he was not accessible; that it
"would be too bold for men to approach
"God immediately; that they thought it
"necessary to approach him as a great
"king, by applying themselves first to his
"chief ministers, who, like mediators with
"kings, acquaint them with the business
"of their petitioners, and return their an-
"swers, signifying to them what is the
"prince's will and pleasure. Hence the
"Sabians (who seem to have held some of
"the most ancient principles of idolatry)
"used angels and planets as mediators,
"whom they thought to be seven vice-
"roys, or lower kings, inhabiting those
"bodies of light, as so many palaces or
"temples; in imitation of which, some
"built temples or chapels for them on
"earth, in which they placed images de-
"dicated to the stars: such chapels are
"called tabernacles in the Holy Scripture,
"as the tabernacles of Moloch, and Rem-
"phon, &c. For, when the planets were
"so far off, and sometimes not appearing
"when set, seemed absent from the earth,
"they thought it advisable to erect images
"to these planets, which might partake of
"their influences, and never be absent
"from them, and to whom, being always
"present with them, they might always
"have access, both day and night. The
"astrologers of those times were wont to

" appropriate to some planet, colours, me-
" tals, wood, stone, trees, fruits. They
" made their images of some materials
" more peculiarly proper to such particular
" planet, and chose a proper time, when
" the planet was in its own exaltation, and
" in a lucky aspect with other planets;
" and then they imagined, that such an
" image, made of such materials, and in
" such position of the heavens, as a talis-
" man or charm, by which they supposed
" the influences of the stars themselves,
" with prayers and incense, were commu-
" nicated to the images, and that such
" images had the same powers and virtues
" with the stars they represented.

" This soon brought them to worship
" these images, as well as the stars them-
" selves; they prayed to them, and sought
" to appease them with incense; the wor-
" shippers clothed themselves in garments
" of such colours as they thought would
" be most proper and agreeable to such a
" planet. In the mean time they forgot
" God, and hoped to obtain the blessings,
" and escape the evils of life, through the
" favour of these spirits or angels inhabit-
" ing the stars, and by the honours they
" paid to them in their images; consider-
" ing them as appointed the governors of
human affairs, and guardians of mortal
" man. Hence their vain imagination, im-
" proving this hypothesis, made some of

"these angels presidents over kingdoms, "cities, and particular persons, and gave "them a dominion over the seasons of the "year, the months, the days, and the "hours. The planetary distribution of our "days of the week, at this distance of time, "is an evident proof of the antiquity and "universality of this part of idolatry, in "principle, as well as in practice."

Hyde Hist. Relig. Persarum, l. I. p. 128.

It is no wonder, when all the planets were thus supposed the palaces and seats of angels and archangels, that the two more glorious lights, the sun and moon, should be the chief and most distinguished objects of religious worship; that the sun should be reverenced as the king, and the moon be addressed as the queen of heaven, or that they should be honoured as the heads of the other stars, the host of heaven. Hence there seems so often mention of Moloch and Baal, king and lord, for the sun; of Baaltis, Beltis, or Malcha, lady and queen, for the moon, who is also supposed the Astarte of the Syrians and Egyptians, and the Astaroth of the Hebrews.

Voss. de Idolatria, l. II. c. xxi. p. 205.

These seem the more common principles of idolatry; but some, as Maimonides observes, went further, to assert the eternity of the world, and that the stars they worshipped were a sort of self-existent beings, and was the real meaning of the fabulous account they gave of the history of Adam*.

* Intentio autem illorum in commemoratione Adami, et eorum quæ ei attribuunt, ad nihil aliud tendit, quam

How long it was before the souls of men departed were worshipped as gods, is not certain; but the doctrines of the existence of departed souls, and their advancement in understanding and power, were certainly very ancient. As the existence of departed souls seems to have been the received doctrine of the Hebrew nation, there was reason for a particular caution against consulting the dead, or, in our translation, a necromancer †. This way of divination by the dead, with the particular ceremonies of it, by filling a trench with blood, inviting the ghosts to partake of it, and the eagerness with which they came to feed upon the blood, are described at length, by one of the oldest authors of Greece, and thoroughly acquainted with the most ancient doctrines and ceremonies of their religion. Homer Odyss. l. 11, init.

Such were the received principles of idolatry; it became the wisdom of God to guard the Hebrew nations against them, when they were to be raised up the guardians of true religion, to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God.

2. It also became the wisdom of God, in giving a law to the Hebrews, to weaken

ad confirmandam sententiam de æternitate mundi, et ut inde porro sequatur, astra et orbes esse deos.—*Maimon. Mor. Nevoc.* P. III. c. xxix. p. 423.

† דרש אל־המתים Deut. xviii. 11.

all encouragements to idolatry. You see, the principles of idolatry had made spirits of great power inhabitants and governors of the stars, guardians of mortal man, presidents of countries and cities, who could foretel things to come, and bestow on their favourites plentiful seasons, and punish their enemies with barrenness and unfruitful seasons; so that they learned to look for health and long life, and all manner of prosperity, from their favour, and to fear every evil from their displeasure. Thus the astrologers (persons supposed best skilled in the knowledge of the stars, and of their influences, and the ways of making an advantage to themselves from them) imposed upon the ignorant vulgar, very desirous of these blessings. They joined advantages they were very fond of, with the notions of piety and devotion, and spread their poison more easily, till at the last they were brought to worship those stars, and their images, with a proper divine worship. Thus they came to regard the creature only, and to neglect altogether the only Creator of all.

Hyde Rel. vet. Pers. 129.

You easily perceive how fond most persons are of knowing things to come, and how greedily people use every method of inquiring into future events, or of curing diseases by charms, and such-like fooleries, without any good reason, against all probability, and often even without a possibi-

lity of any real effect at all. How much more easily must this desire prevail, when countenanced by numbers, as a point of great knowledge and deep wisdom, to know the natures, orders, and influences of the immortal gods, and how to make their office, as guardians of mortal men, highly beneficial to themselves!

Many things concurred to draw the whole world into these corruptions, from the most common prejudices and affections of the vulgar. It was wise to prevent these fatal mischiefs, by cutting off these encouragements, by discrediting all such religious rites, and all pretenders to a skill of obtaining these blessings, in the use of them. It was wise to represent such rites themselves as criminal, highly dishonourable to the true God. It was even necessary, when such evil customs had such advantages of prevailing, to guard the Hebrew church by laws pointed directly against them.

3. It was further a point of wisdom in the Hebrew laws, to give a form of worship which should be a preservative against the use of any idolatrous rite, in company with their idolatrous neighbours. There were many temptations, even in their usual entertainments and conversations: their sacrifices were attended with feasts, in which they were used to indulge great lewdness, as well as great excess. These

were not only the effects sometimes of their idolatrous rites, but often acts of their idolatrous worship itself, as we have before observed, in the festivals of Venus, and the temples, in which many persons were consecrated to debauchery. It was easy to foresee the dangers of these temptations to intemperance and debauchery; and wise, therefore, to prevent them.

The historical account how the Hebrews fell into the idolatry of the Moabites, well shows the danger, and the reason of it. *But Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bow down to their gods; and Israel joined himself to Baal-Peor.* This invitation, which the Moabites and Midianites gave to the people of Israel, to the sacrifices of their gods, or as guests to the feasts, made upon their sacrifices, was given by the advice and counsel of Balaam, as a most likely way to ensnare them. Whatever may be in the story told by the Jewish doctors, as related by Bishop Patrick, it was very likely that luxurious feasts, and the conversation of women prepared to entice them, by lewdness, into idolatry, would prevail upon them to join themselves to Baal-Peor: it was necessary then to keep the Hebrews from the danger of such con-

Num. xxv. 1, 2.

Numb. xxxi. 16.

versations, if they were to be kept from falling in with them in their idolatry.

4. It was also a point of wisdom, in giving the Hebrews a law, to give them such constitutions as would fix in their minds a contempt of the superstitious ceremonies and idolatrous rites of their neighbours; to teach them to account those things abominable and polluting, which idolatry recommended as holy, religious, and venerable: they were better fenced against falling in with rites made sacred by idolatrous principles, where they were accustomed, by the rites of their own religion, to account them a pollution, and such a defilement as required an expiation. It was of great use, more especially, to represent the magical rites of idolatrous worship, not only as weak, proceeding from a low understanding, and want of a good judgment, but as a great and dangerous corruption of true religion, abominable in the sight of God, and therefore highly displeasing unto him. It became then the wisdom of God to give a ritual, in aid, to help against the silly superstitions, and the immoral and wicked rites so usually joined with them. In such cases it was not unworthy the care of a divine law to obviate any of those rites, which as charms or spells, or any way, were used to procure the presence of dæmons and ghosts, and oblige them to fore-

tel the future events of things to nations and private persons; or were supposed as acceptable to their idol gods, more surely to conciliate their favour, protection, and blessing.

Thus, if it was a custom in idol worship, on what reasons soever, for men to worship in the garments of women, and women in the garments of men; if idol worshippers were accustomed to use blood, especially in consulting the dead, as means of raising ghosts and departed spirits, to answer questions, and to divine by; if they were used to consecrate bats and mice, and other insects, as a sacrifice of greatest efficacy with their principal god, the archangel, presiding in the sun; it was a just and wise reason why the Mosaical ritual should treat such things with contempt, and warn the Hebrews carefully to avoid them, as highly unbecoming the purity, dignity, and honour of a people chosen and devoted to keep up the knowledge and worship of the true God in the world. These were superstitions of so evil and dangerous consequences, that they deserved more than the ridicule of satire, for their folly, to be treated as inconsistent with the true honour and worship of God, and highly displeasing to him.

When one design, then, of giving a ritual of worship was to preserve from idolatrous customs, it must be wise to repre-

sent them as contemptible and abominable in the eyes of the Hebrews, however sacred they might appear in the eyes of the Canaanites or the Egyptians.

CHAP. III.

Another great Design of the Mosaical Ritual of Worship was, to appoint such ceremonial Constitutions as should best and most effectually answer the foregoing Ends.

Mosaical worship was to be a ritual.

THAT the worship of the Hebrew church, directed by the law of Moses, principally consists in a great variety of rites and ceremonies, every one knows, who knows any thing at all of it; but they are few, in comparison, who receive the true reasons, why this method was fit and wise above all others, at that time and in those circumstances. Many now, at least, are apt to say, they can hardly see any reasons at all to justify their observation, at least, no reasons sufficient to make them acts of religious worship, of every part of worship, of the most solemn worship of the whole church. But these and such-like prejudices will appear, I hope, to proceed from want of a true knowledge and right understanding of the real and wise reasons of their appointment. There are two ways of instruction, as well as of

expressing devotion to God, and giving honour unto his name; the one by plain doctrines and precepts, a plain revelation of truths to be believed, and of duties which religion requires to be done. This is thought by many a good and sufficient way of teaching religion, and to be preferred to any other; yet there is another way of teaching the same truths and the same duties, by significant actions; for actions, in many cases, have as plain a meaning, and as easy signification, as words, and, in some cases, are stronger expressions, and convey a more emphatical meaning. It is a proper inquiry, then, which of these two methods of instruction was most fit and proper on this particular occasion? This question can only be answered by a right understanding of the several circumstances, of the persons, the times, the designs and ends, of any institution of religion. The wisdom of the means or method of instruction will appear from the more effectual influence they are found in reason and experience to have, in obtaining the end and design proposed in the use of them. Hence, in different circumstances, different methods will be found most fit, aud are therefore most proper, because most useful in attaining their ends.

If the following comparison does not exactly hit the case, it may serve to illustrate it. Would any man use the same me-

thods of reasoning with a ploughman or a thrasher, as with a man of education and learning; or with a school-boy of ten years of age, as with a man whose mind is ripened by years, and his judgment improved by a knowledge of mankind, and experience of the world?

What then were the circumstances of the Hebrew nation? what the times wherein the Mosaical law was given as a ritual and ceremonial law, instead of a bare revelation of doctrines and precepts, of a more rational and spiritual worship? Consider then the temper and genius of the people, their customs, their manners, and their deep-rooted opinions: consider the great advantage of rites and ceremonies, to answer every intention of this institution, to promote the fear of God, to prevent idolatry, and, which was of great importance in this design, to keep up the memory of the promises, and an expectation of a better state of religion, when the desire of all nations should come, and appear the full glory of his people Israel.

1. Then, it may appear a ritual law was best suited to the genius of the Hebrew nation, and most likely to influence their minds. The Israelites were just come out of Egypt, where they had been long in bondage, used very hardly, and grievously oppressed. The preface to their law put the Israelites in mind of their deliverance:

Exod. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* Yet their masters the Egyptians, however severe masters, were the most famed people on the earth for learning and wisdom, in particular for their ceremonies of religion, which they had invented with entertaining pomp and show, attended with many festivals, celebrated with great luxury, as well as plenty. Probably, the greatest ease the Israelites might find in their state of bondage, was in the holydays of their masters, and the feasts which attended them; they not being so scrupulous, very likely, while in Egypt, as to refuse a portion of their masters' feasts, because they had offered some part of it a sacrifice to idols.

You see, then, the Israelites come out of a state of bondage, of low understandings and weak judgments, as persons oppressed, and kept to hard labour, usually are. Moses, by a particular providence, learned the wisdom of the Egyptians in the king's court; but the general body of the people had neither leisure, nor opportunities, nor abilities for acquirements of learning, or great improvements of reason. I know not why some persons have taken the liberty to reflect upon the Hebrews, as not having as good a natural capacity as other people, or the Egyptians themselves; but I can easily see reasons to believe that a

low education, and great oppression, must make them ignorant and unskilled in any sort of reasonings above their common affairs and business in life.

Besides, it appears, the method of instruction with which they were best acquainted, and best understood, was a figurative instruction by symbols. If the Israelites had any methods of instruction at all, it seems to have been by hieroglyphics. This was a sort of language they were used to, and would understand it much easier than high disquisitions of moral truths, and long rational proof of the obligations of moral duties. They were so full of esteem for rites and ceremonies, that, if it had been left to their choice, they would certainly have instituted them for themselves, nor would they have been satisfied without them. How soon did they oblige Aaron to make them a golden calf, that they might have a visible symbol of the presence of Jehovah, as their God among them? how soon did they appoint a feast on that occasion, *sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play?* Whether you understand that expression, with some, in a more innocent, or, with others, in a more criminal sense, it is plain the Israelites were prone to appoint such rites for their own use, as well as to join with their neighbours in their use of them, and so be drawn aside to the worship of Baal-Peor. It was

Exodus, xxxii. 6.

therefore proper, and necessary, to appoint a ritual for this people, or they would have made one for themselves; likely they would have taken up with some idolatrous rites, of more common use, or which would have been soon corrupted into idolatry.

It was then very fit, that the Hebrews, in these circumstances, should have a ritual, which they were to reverence as of divine authority, and which should remain unchangeable by any future superstitious customs or idolatrous rites, what fondness soever they might have for them on any account.

A ritual, it seems, they could not do without, but it was fit they should have a ritual free from what a weak judgment, superstitious temper, or proneness to idolatry, would have made it. They were not to be left to themselves, either first to make a ritual, or afterwards to mend it, as they might call it, but which, in truth, would have been to corrupt it, with alterations or additions. Therefore the wisdom of God directed a ritual of his own appointment, which they had reason to reverence on account of his wisdom and authority, and which it was not lawful for them, on any pretence, to alter. So the law expressly:

Deut iv. 6, 7. *Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them.—Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,*

neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandment of the Lord your God, which I command you. So proper was a ritual of worship for the genius and circumstances of the Hebrew nation, when their law was given them by Moses.

2. Another consideration, that shows the fitness of a ritual of worship for the Hebrews, is, that it was as a necessary hedge or fence to preserve, by principles of religion, a pure worship of God, by cutting off every pretence to a compliance with idolatrous ceremonies. If the Israelites had been without a ritual of their own, they might, and likely would, have been uneasy, looking upon the worship of their neighbours as made more venerable by their rites and ceremonies; at least, they might have concluded, as they had no rites in their own worship, they were things indifferent in religion; that, if the use of them was of no advantage, neither would it do them any harm. How easily might persons, thus reasoning in themselves, join with their neighbours in their feasts of Baal-Peor, if they found any pleasure in them, or had any ends to serve by such civilities. It became, then, the wisdom of a law, which was designed as a wall of partition to keep this holy nation from the corruptions of an idolatrous world, to appoint the use of such rites as should make

it a point of religion to them, not to join in any of the idolatrous rites of their neighbours. In this view, it was wise to make that unclean to the Hebrews, which idolatry made sacred to their neighbours. The pomp of shows, the luxury of splendid feasts, would lose much of their influence, if the Hebrews were sure to meet with something unclean in them, according to the ritual of their own religion. Suppose, for instance, a general use of blood, in their idolatrous festivals, as blood was accounted the food of their dæmons, and they eating the flesh of the sacrifice, and the dæmons the blood, it became a kind of idolatrous sacrament, and testimony of their communion with idols; was it not fit the Hebrew ritual should make eating of blood an uncleanness and pollution, more effectually to preserve them from those festivals, where eating of blood was of sacred and religious use?

We see this idolatrous custom, and may perceive the danger of it from Maimonides*, who represents it from their own

* Porro scito, quod licet sanguis immundus, et impius admodum fuerit in oculis Zabiorum, tamen ab illis comestus fuerit, eo quod existimarint, cibum hunc esse dæmonum; et quod is qui, cum comedit, communicationem aliquam cum dæmonibus acquirat; ita ut familiariter cum illo conversentur, et futura ei aperiant, prout vulgus dæmonibus ita attribuere solet. *Our Hebrew master further observes of some, who would not eat of the blood themselves, yet had another way of com-*

books, as a custom ancient and extensive. It might well, therefore, give a reason for that constitution, *Only ye shall not eat the blood, ye shall pour it upon the earth, as water: And ye shall not eat any thing with the blood;* rather, as learned men have observed, at, or by, the blood. This use of blood in idolatrous feasts, the danger of misleading the Hebrews into idolatry by it, is a wise and sufficient reason for a constitution in their law, to forbid the use of blood. And this also teaches the necessity of a ritual, as a middle wall of partition, effectually to separate them from all the idolatrous customs of their neighbours, since it must have been very dangerous to them, if their own worship had allowed them to join with their neighbours, even in their idolatrous usages.

Deut. xii. 16.

Lev. xix. 26.

על הדם

3. The reason and wisdom of a ritual of worship for the Hebrews, may also appear as a proper and honourable distinction of that people, as an holy nation to Jehovah. It became a people, which was separated from the rest of the world, to

A ritual a proper, honourable distinction of the Hebrews.

munion with the dæmon: Hi mactantes bestiam aliquam, sanguinem ejus accipiebant, et in vase, vel fossula aliqua colligebant, carnem vero mactatam circa illum sanguinem, in circulo sedentes, comedebant, imaginantes sibi, in hoc opere, ipsis carnem comedentibus, dæmones illum sanguinem comedere, et hunc ipsorum esse cibum, hocque medio amicitiam, fraternitatem, et familiaritatem inter ipsos contrahi, quia omnes in una mensa edunt, et uno concessu accumbunt.—*Maimon. Mor. Neb.* P. III. c. xlvi. p. 484.

keep the faith, and maintain the worship of the one true God; to have visible marks of their designation to this service, and such honourable distinctions as should raise their own esteem, and conciliate the esteem of others, for the dignity of their character, as an holy nation. This design in their ritual is pointed out directly by Moses: *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither you go to possess it; keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people: for what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God, in all things that we call upon him for? and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?*

Deut. iv. 5, 6, 7, 8.

This, among other reasons, was very proper to show the great use of a ritual for the Hebrews, that they might perceive themselves what honour was put upon them, as consecrated to God, above all other nations of the earth, and that the world, when it saw the wisdom of their law and constitutions, should say, *Surely*

this nation is a wise and understanding people.

There had been rites of very ancient use, to express the purity required in the worship of God, and the devotion of heart in which the acceptable worship of God will always chiefly consist; such as an acknowledgment of the evil and guilt of sin; of the holiness and justice of God; an acknowledgment of God, as the author of every good and perfect gift. Expressions of a grateful sense of the goodness of God in every blessing of life; of hope and trust in the favour of God, for future mercies; and an honourable acknowledgment of God's power and good-will, the most rational foundation of hope, for the future blessings of life, through his protection: all these were well expressed in the easy signification of sin offerings, peace offerings, and sacrifices of thanksgiving. How ancient was the use of sacrifices! how well was this meaning of them understood, in the patriarchal state! It seems that, in general, this custom was derived from the same original to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, as well as the Hebrews. But, as the nations fell into idolatry, the use of sacrifices was very soon so corrupted as to become some of the highest acts of idolatrous worship, and degenerated not only into weak and ridiculous, but into very immoral and wicked

actions. They sacrificed men, and women, and children, to Mithra, and divined by their entrails, as Dr. Hyde* has observed from Photius. The many abominations practised, allowed, and even made sacred in the sacrificial rites of idolaters, made the use of sacrifices in their original purity, preserving them in their first good meaning and intention, a very honourable distinction of the Hebrew nation, as guardians of the purity of religious worship.

Their marks of purity, as the worshippers of the true God, were marks of their distinguishing privileges and honours; the visible presence of Jehovah was a glory to their temple. The privilege of so near approach to the glorious presence of God, dwelling between the cherubim; the answers of the oracle by Urim and Thummim; the altars of burnt offering and incense so immediately before the presence of the one true God, the only Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, of angels and men, and every creature, as the ritual taught, and so clearly expressed: these must, in the esteem of the Hebrews, be an honourable distinction of their nation from other people; it must be to their honour in the sight of the nations, who should ever rightly compare their rituals together; but for

* Θυοντες τε ανδρας και παιδας και γυναικας, τοις σπλαγχνοις μαντευομενοι. Hyde Rel. Vet. Pers. 112.

both these ends it was convenient and necessary this distinction should be visible, without which it would not have been observable to themselves, or others. It was therefore for this, as well as other reasons, to be a ritual.

A figure of good things to come, must be a ritual.

Let it be added, the law of Moses was designed to be a figure of good things to come, it was therefore necessary it should be a ritual. The Apostle to the Hebrews has so fully asserted and proved this design of the Mosaical law, that there is no room left to question it, where the authority of that Epistle is received. Indeed, the most surprising agreement between the ritual description, and the truth of the things designed to be represented, is such, that every one who considers it with any attention, must confess, that the law of Moses is the gospel of the Messiah, in hieroglyphic, or figure. So distinctly, so exactly does it represent the person, the offices, and the actions of the Messias, the grace, blessings, and happiness of the Christian church; as we shall see more fully, in its proper place.

As this was one design of the law itself, to preserve the memory of the promise, and prepare for the accomplishment of it, it was highly fit and wise, that both should be answered by a ritual; for, supposing such a design in the Hebrew law, it could not have been answered any other way, at least

so well, as by a ritual. Whatever notions some may have of the preference of a rational worship to a ritual, or of the advantage of a deliverance from a yoke of numerous, chargeable, and burdensome rites, they should not, however, add useless and insignificant rites and ceremonies, when they speak of the Mosaical law; for they were very significant, and of very great use, all things considered, to answer many good designs by them, most suited to the then circumstances of the world, and of religion in it, most suited to the particular circumstances of the Hebrew nation, and the design of raising them to be the guardians of true religion.

If, then, we would rightly judge of the fitness, expediency, or wisdom of the Hebrew ritual, it must be very wrong to take an estimate of it, by considering only what we imagine the most perfect plan of religion, considered in itself, should have been, without taking into consideration the true state and condition of the world and religion, and those circumstances which were of such consequence, that, without a regard to them, there was reason to fear true religion would soon have been lost in the world, as experience had then shown it was in the idolatrous nations, and as it was just going to be among the Hebrews too, if the goodness of God had not taken some care to prevent it.

Every one will perceive the law of Moses was in fact given with these views; so that these reasons are not given by guess; they are not an hypothesis formed on imagination, on doubtful or mistaken principles: they are grounded on unquestionable facts, most evident in the whole plan of the law itself. View the whole Hebrew ritual in this light, and you will see the whole and every part of it proper and fit to answer these ends. The whole appears uniform and rational, if referred to them; but it must do violence to their plain meaning and intention, if you force upon it another meaning, and intentions inconsistent with it. And it seems as evident, that these designs of giving a law are every way worthy the goodness and wisdom of God, and were the glory and happiness of the Hebrew nation. What is there in any of these designs, but what was fit to be considered, in giving a new law to the family of Abraham, when that family was appointed to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God in the world, and the memory of their own privileges, hopes, and happiness, as the people, and only church of God in the world? Here were indeed additions to the laws of the patriarchal and Abrahamic worship; but they were an addition of wise and necessary laws, to keep this church from the greatest danger, and to preserve the essen-

tials of true religion and worship among them. To answer these ends, it was necessary to appoint a ritual of worship, very particular and exact, that no room might be left to corrupt their law by any liberty of additions or alteration. Could the wit of man have contrived a ritual more serviceable to these ends? Was this a matter of so little consequence, to be left, in such circumstances, to bare, dry instructions, to a people of low understanding, prejudiced in favour of idolatrous principles and usages, which had already baffled all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians? Hard it is, and very unjust, to object against this law, as a yoke of bondage, when it was a necessary fence to the laws of true religion, a necessary wall of partition from an idolatrous world; nor is it easy to conceive how the wisdom of God could have answered these designs better in any other way.

As, then, these considerations will open to us the true reason of the Mosaical law and ritual of worship, so they will show them, all things considered, a very useful, and therefore a wise constitution, well becoming the wisdom and goodness of God to appoint.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

How the foregoing Plan of a Ritual answered in the Mosaical Law.

HAVING premised the general reasons, from which the Hebrew ritual was like to be formed as a proper plan, offered by the then circumstances of the world and church, it will be proper to consider the actual execution of this design, and what ritual was appointed by Moses, agreeable to them. It is only such a consideration of the constitutions of Moses, that can show us how far they answer these wise and good designs proposed by them. It is too common for men to take the law of Moses, as it were, to pieces, to examine one particular rite or ceremony singly and by itself, and then to reflect upon it, as weak, useless, and unprofitable to promote true virtue and goodness, the chief ends of religion, and too hastily conclude, without due examination, such constitutions unworthy the wisdom of God. But this is going much too fast. The wisdom of particulars is often indiscernible, considered in themselves only. When considered as parts

of an whole, and of what service they are to the harmony, the strength, and the use of it, they discover a wisdom which would otherwise be altogether unperceived: thus, consider the Hebrew ritual in some one particular ceremony, and you may not see either the end or the use of the institution; when, if you consider the place it has in the ritual, and how it contributes to the harmony of the whole, you will see how it promotes the general design of the whole, a design most useful and profitable, to promote true virtue and goodness, from the best principles, the fear and love of God.

As the Hebrew ritual has generally been considered, some parts of it seem to have been considered very imperfectly, or hardly at all. And too often other parts of it seem to have been over-considered, by mixing the additions of the rabbies to the rites of Moses, which alone ought to be accounted the Hebrew ritual: these traditions have in many things obscured and corrupted the primitive laws, that their true use and design have been lost to observation; they have been so far perverted into another meaning, that men have been taught by them to transgress the commandments of God. Our Saviour gives a very remarkable instance of this. They had carried the obligation of a vow so far as to teach, if a man had made a vow of a sum of money

for the use of the temple, he was so far excused from providing for his own parents in their necessities. Matt. xv. 3.

Consider then this ritual, not as loose unconnected laws, but as a regular system, and body of laws, taking care of every part of religion, omitting nothing proper to be taken care of, and ordering every thing to answer one common wise design, the glory of God, the only proper object of worship, and the perfection and happiness of the worshippers in virtue and goodness, in the protection and blessing of the Supreme God, and we shall be able to form a right judgment of it. So God directed Moses to declare to the congregation of the children of Israel, *Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.* Levit. xix. 2. A consideration of the Hebrew ritual, as a whole body of laws, would evidently show the mistake of interpreting the holiness of the law of the Mosaical ritual as only ceremonial, consisting in outward washings, purifications, expiations, and the like. It would plainly show, that the true spirit and meaning of the whole law, and of each particular rite of it, of all ceremonial holiness itself, was to teach and exhort the Hebrews, as an holy nation, to serve God in purity of heart, in real holiness, in a conformity to the whole will, and to the perfections of the holy God himself. The ritual of the Hebrews had a body of moral laws, as well

as ceremonial constitutions, appointed in it. This the ritual itself plainly taught; thus the prophets, the best expositors of the laws of Moses, explained it.

It may be further of use to have a short plan, and in some order before us, of this state of religion, which was of divine original, of long continuance, and a figure of our own, now the promised Messiah has given the world the last and most perfect state of religion: this will help to show the proper wisdom and goodness of the law of Moses, as to its design; and the greater comparative excellency of the Gospel of Christ, which has blessed all nations of the earth with much better things than these.

It is not material, I think, in what order or method the laws of this ritual shall be digested. I may be indulged, I hope, to follow my own plan; as some of the laws of this ritual more particularly regard the object of the Hebrew worship, and the worship to be given to Jehovah as the one true God. As other laws more particularly regard the Hebrew church and nation as the seed of Abraham, and a peculiar people to Jehovah, separate from the idolatrous nations consecrated to his service, and to worship him as the only Holy One of Israel; I shall first consider those laws of the ritual which relate to Jehovah the object of their worship, and to the worship the ritual directed to be given to Jehovah, or

to be offered before the presence; and in the next I shall consider those laws of the ritual which relate to the holiness of the Hebrew nation, as the church of Jehovah and holy seed of Abraham, who were to keep themselves from idols, and from all idolatrous customs. These two considerations will prepare the way to apply the whole ritual and every part of it, to the designs for which it was formed, which will best show the wisdom and the goodness of these laws.

CHAP. II.

Ritual of the Schechinah, or Presence of Jehovah, the Object of Worship, and of the Worship directed to be offered at the Presence of Jehovah, or the Shechinah.

One great end of the Hebrew ritual and of all its laws, was to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God, in the family of Abraham, chosen, raised, favoured, blessed, above all nations for this purpose. As their neighbour heathen nations boasted much in the near presence of their idol gods, in their images and temples, to whom they could have immediate access as their guardians and protectors, and to whom they could make known their requests without any delay; so it pleased God to give his favoured people an assurance of his immediate pre-

sence with them, that his protection and blessing were near at hand, ready at what time soever they called upon Jehovah as their God. God's universal presence might have been a just foundation for this hope to men who had a right understanding of the perfections of God, who had capacities and leisure for such reasonings as should evidence the omnipresence of God; but as, in the then state of the world, and of the Hebrew nation, very few could be supposed capable of deep reasonings, or sufficiently attentive to them; and as they were much influenced by the common prejudices; and as this law was to be a ritual, for the reasons you have already seen; it became the wisdom of God, as useful to all the ends of the ritual, to appoint a visible symbol of his presence, and to fix the residence of this presence in the temple, or sanctuary, to direct all the worship of the church to it, as a kebla; to give out all the laws and orders from it, as an oracle; and to keep there the state of a court, as supreme civil magistrate, and king of Israel. The whole worship of the Hebrew church, directed to this presence, as a kebla *, the

* Kebla, in the eastern writers, is used for a certain point in the heavens, as the east, or sun-rising; or the situation of a place or temple to which persons turned their faces when they prayed, as the Hebrews did towards Jerusalem. It is now become a term to denote the place of the presence of God.

whole civil government centring in it, in the last resort, as an oracle, make this part of the ritual of great and necessary use, to a full understanding of the whole. I should imagine some part of the obscurity of these laws of Moses arises from hence, that the true intent and meaning of the presence of Jehovah in the sanctuary, has not been so clearly and so fully explained as it might have been.

Before this Hebrew ritual there was no fixed residence of the divine presence, or visible appearance of the glory of Jehovah in one particular place; yet God was pleased, even from the beginning, to appear on particular occasions, to speak to the fathers, and to make known his will, by his oracle, to the patriarchs. Such were the appearances of Jehovah to Abraham, the command and revelation of God to Noah, the several appearances of God to our first parents, especially in that circumstantial account Moses gives so particularly of the appearance of Jehovah, and voice of the oracle. Gen. iii. 8, &c.

Infinite being does indeed infer infinite presence. The light of reason, as well as revelation, teaches, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain God, but that he fills heaven and earth, as he declares of himself. In this sense God is equally present in all places and with all persons, and has a constant and immediate influence on

every creature through the immeasurable extent of the whole creation. But as God is invisible to bodily sense, as every spiritual being necessarily is, this presence of God is to be perceived by the eyes of the understanding only, neither to be seen by the eye, or heard by the ear, or manifested to any of our bodily senses. Yet as the wisdom of God thought fit, for many good reasons, to manifest himself and his will, on extraordinary occasions, to particular persons, by visible appearances and the audible voice of an oracle, such appearances have been usually called, and I think very properly, God's special presence. Now, the notice of such a presence conveyed to men by their bodily senses, must of necessity be local and sensible; for, as the presence of men is local, they can see and hear only in one place; and as their bodily senses can only perceive a bodily appearance, it was necessary such appearance of the divine presence should be local and sensible; but this, you easily understand, without any prejudice to the universal presence of Jehovah, a perfection of his infinite nature and being, or of his necessary and self existence, of which the ritual has taken very great care, as we shall hereafter see: so that this gracious presence of Jehovah in the church of Israel, must not be mistaken, as some seem to imagine, either from weakness of judg-

ment or a prejudiced heart, determined beforehand to find fault, as if it inferred Jehovah to be a local tutelar God; for the symbols of the presence only are local, they are symbols of the presence of an infinite Being, whose presence therefore fills heaven and earth.

But the better to understand this principal part of the Hebrew ritual, for the sake of which the other laws of the ritual were made, and by which we shall better understand their meaning and use, let us consider it in two views; first, what it is designed to represent, and, in the next place, what the representation was.

What the Schechinah represented.

I. Consider then, in the first place, what this visible appearance, or Schechinah, was designed to represent. If you take your account from the whole history and worship of the Hebrew church, from the several directions and laws of the ritual relating to the Schechinah, you will perceive it was designed to represent Jehovah, the God and the King of Israel. It was not designed to represent any of the intelligences, angels, or archangels, supposed to inhabit and animate the sun, the moon, or any of the stars the host of heaven. It was not to represent an Osiris or an Isis, a Jupiter or a Juno, or any of the immortal gods, or deified men, whose presence the idolatrous world courted, and which they hoped to fix in their images

and temples. In opposition to all these false gods, whether styled immortal gods or illustrious heroes, whether angels, or the departed souls of great men, the Schechinah of the Hebrews was the presence of Jehovah; this you see is expressed in the constant style given to him, of *the true God, high above all gods, the Lord of Hosts, the Almighty God, Jehovah,* who says of himself, *I am that I am;* who requires in the most solemn part of the law, that the whole church should own
Exod. xx. and acknowledge him to be the *Lord their God, and that they should have no other God besides him.*

This character of the God of Israel represented by the Schechinah is confirmed in the solemn worship of the church. Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, stood before the altar of Jehovah, in the presence of all the congregation, and spread
2 Chr. vi. 12, 14. forth his hands and said, *O Jehovah, God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in the heaven nor the earth:* he further owns, this Jehovah, to whom he addresses his prayer, is that infinite Being, whose pre-
18. sence is every where; *Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee, how much less this house, which I have built.* And concludes this pe-
21. tition in these remarkable words: *Hearken therefore to the supplications of thy ser-*

vant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make towards this place; hear thou from thy dwelling-place, even from heaven, and when thou hearest forgive. How the church considered the character of Jehovah their God, in the after-days of Nehemiah, may appear from their solemn prayer, *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone (or, thou only art Jehovah): thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.* Neh. ix. 6.

Jehovah, then, the God of Israel, who was represented in the Schechinah, was not any local tutelar God; but, as Moses describes him, *Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord (Jehovah) he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.* Deut. iv. 39. This is so fully and so clearly set before us for our observation, that the whole design and use of the Hebrew ritual and worship will be found finally to centre in it.

II. Consider now how Jehovah was represented in the ritual. This representation is usually called the Shechinah, the habitation, or dwelling, from an Hebrew word that signifies to inhabit or dwell; so that the tabernacle, from the same word Shacan, is called mishcan. God therefore directs, *And let them make me a sanctuary;* שכן Exod. xxv. 8.

that I may dwell amongst them. Shechinah, then, is the proper word to express this extraordinary appearance of Jehovah in his temple, and which I shall therefore make use of in what I have further to say on this subject. There is another word by which this extraordinary appearance is often expressed, which may give some further light to the ritual of the appearance: it is called *the glory, or the glory of God,* Chebod Jehovah. The ancient Greek interpreters, and the writers of the New Testament use the same expression, to denote the extraordinary presence of God. It is observed of the presence of God on Mount Sinai, *And the glory of the Lord abode on Mount Sinai. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire, on the top of the Mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel*.* In allusion to this, the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, calls the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, the cherubim of glory, or of the glory; that is, of the Shechinah of Jehovah dwelling between the cherubim, over the mercy-seat. St. Peter uses the same expression, when, speaking of the voice from heaven at Christ's transfiguration, or the oracle which declared him God's beloved Son, he calls it the voice

כבוד יהוה

δοξα, or δοξα τȣ Θεȣ.

Heb. ix. 5.

2 Pet. 1. 17.

* In the original, וישכן כבוד יהוה על הר, which the LXX thus translate: και κατεβη ἡ δοξα τȣ Θεȣ επι το Ορος τȣ Σιναι . . . τȣ δε ειδος της δοξης Κυριȣ ωσει πυρ φλεγον.

from the excellent glory*; manifestly using it as an expression equivalent to the glory of Jehovah. Before we examine what was the particular symbol of this presence, or glory of Jehovah, it will be proper to consider the general meaning of the Shechinah, in which the Hebrew masters will afford us some light.

Maimonides has a particular chapter on this expression, Shechinah. "This word, as "is known, signifies," he says, "continu- "ance of station, or staying in some parti- "cular place; thence it is applied also to "things inanimate, and so to every thing "which remains constantly and much in "any thing, although that thing in which "the other remains is not place, and "though that thing which so remains is "not animate." He explains his meaning, otherwise somewhat obscure, by an example: "When Job cursed the day of his "birth, he uses this expression, *Let a* "*cloud dwell upon it.* Here," says Maimonides, "it is manifest, that the cloud is "nothing animated, nor is day a body or "any thing incorporeal, but only a portion "of time; and according to this use," he adds, "it is ascribed to the Creator, to ex- "press the dwelling or stay of his majesty "and providence, in any place; for where- "ever he shall place the signs of his majesty "and providence, and wherever he causes

Mor. Nev. P. I. c. xxv.

Job, iii. 5.

* Του της μεγαλοπρεπους δοξης.

" his providence to dwell, he is said to " dwell there; wherefore, wherever this " action (of dwelling) is found ascribed " to the Creator, it signifies the continu- " ance of his majesty, that is, of a created " light, in some place, or of the divine " Providence, in some thing, according to " the intention of each place *."

This learned master explains his meaning more fully in another place: " Some- " times a created splendour (or light) is " meant by the glory of the Lord, which " God causes to continue in some place, as " a wonder, or miracle, to represent his " magnificence; as, And the glory of the " Lord abode on Mount Sinai, and the " cloud covered it †." This is what he often calls, occasionally, the created light: " If," says he, "you will understand by the " glory of the Lord the created light, there " will be nothing absurd in it."

Part I. lib. xix.

This Shechinah is also called the presence, or the face of God: *And he (Jeho-*

* Quare, in quocunque loco, actio hæc (habitatio) invenitur attributa Creatori, significat commorationem majestatis ipsius, h. e. gloriæ creatæ in loco aliquo, vel Providentiam divinam, in re quapiam pro ratione, scil. uniuscujusque loci.—*Maimon.* Part I. lib. xxv.

† Per gloriam Domini significatur nonnunquam splendor aliquis creatus, quem Deus quasi prodigii vel miraculi loco, ad magnificentiam suam ostendendam, alicubi habitare fecit, ut, " Et habitavit gloria Domini " super Montem Sinai, et obtexit eum."—*Idem*, Part I. lib. lxiv.

vah) said, My presence shall go with thee. In the original פני The LXX, with good reason, render it, I myself will go before you. Onkelos, the Chaldee paraphrast, calls it, My Shechinah, and the Arabic version, שכנתי My light. Exodus, xxxiii. 14. Αυτος προπορευσομαι.

There is one thing more relating to this Shechinah in general, which you are to observe, that the tabernacle and temple were from thence called the place which the Lord should choose to put his name there: *But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even to his habitation, shall you seek, and thither shalt thou come.* Deut. xii. 5. God himself afterwards expresses the sanctification of his temple by his presence in it: *For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever, and mine eye and heart shall be there perpetually;* 2 Chron. vii. 16. so that for God to put his name upon the place he had chosen for his presence, is expressive of the Shechinah, the divine glory or majesty; and so the ancient interpreters, before mentioned, call it his Shechinah, and his light. Bishop Patrick seems to give a plain and just sense of these expressions, in few words, on Deut. xii. 5. By the name of God is meant, he observes, God himself; as, to call upon his name, is to call upon him; and therefore the sense is, where he would make his dwelling-place, by settling the

ark and cloud of glory there, which was the token of his presence. Upon this general account of the Shechinah most have formed a notion of it, as an extraordinary appearance of some visible and sensible symbol or token of God's presence in some shape of light, or form of a luminous body.

But to understand more clearly the intention, meaning, and use of this principal part of the Hebrew ritual, it will be of importance to consider what visible appearance was made the symbol of the presence, majesty, glory, or name of God; and how this symbol of the presence was to be received into its sanctuary, to be present with the Hebrew church and nation, as their God and King. As, then, the sanctuary was directed to be built as a place where the Shechinah was to reside, when rightly understood, it will give a more useful understanding of the Shechinah, or the glorious presence of God itself.

Form of the Shechinah.

1. First let us consider the manner or form of the appearance itself; for, whatever is visible must so appear as to be seen in some shape or other, and so was the Shechinah: though there is an express prohibition to make any similitude or image of God, it is explained to mean *a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female of any beast of the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of*

any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; that is, to make any image after the manner of the Egyptians, or Canaanite idolaters: therefore the Hebrews are exhorted, *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire; and ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice.* Though they saw a fire, it was not in the likeness or shape of any sort of a creature, as the images of idolaters; here was not the form of a calf, a lion, an eagle, or a man, or any sort of beast, bird, fish, or insect. Not to indulge conjectures concerning the form in which the Shechinah did appear, for it must appear in some shape to be visible, though not in the similitude of any of those animals which the Egyptians and Canaanites had made the symbols of their idols; yet if we will carefully mind the manner in which the appearances of the Shechinah on record, are described in Scripture, we shall sufficiently understand the manner of the appearance, and very nearly the form in which Jehovah manifested himself by his visible Shechinah. Let us consider a few of these appearances in particular.

Deut. iv. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Deut. v. 12.

1. We have an account of the appearance of the Shechinah to Moses, which, as

far as concerns our inquiry after the form of it, is to this purpose: *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.* An angel of the Lord, in general, means some messenger from God, for angel is properly a name of office, so that, in the Hebrew style, storms, burning winds, and pestilential distempers, are angels of God, or his messengers of destruction to punish a sinful nation, or to cut off wicked persons. Thus, the Shechinah appearing as an oracle bringing a message from Jehovah, may be styled, with very great propriety, the angel of the Lord.

That this was a proper appearance of the Shechinah, seems evident; as Jehovah called to Moses out of the bush; as he declared the ground he stood upon was holy ground, by reason of the presence; as he proclaimed his name to be, *I am that I am*, or the eternal, self-existent Being; and as he commanded Moses to deliver his message to the children of Israel in these words: And he said, *Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.*

Deut. iv. 14.

We are here to observe the visible form, as well as the voice of the oracle, in this appearance. What Moses saw was a bush, that burned with fire, and was not con-

sumed. To keep to the text: this fire, as it appeared to Moses, seemed to him a natural fire, which he expected would have consumed the bush, like other fires; nor does this description represent any thing wonderful in the flame or fire itself: what filled Moses with wonder was, that the bush was not burned. When he examined it more nearly, what he found extraordinary in it was, that such a flame should not consume the bush: *And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.* Deut. iv. 3.

All that you can surely conclude from this representation is, that the Shechinah appeared in the visible form of a natural fire, likely strong, vehement, shining, and glorious: and thus the Hebrew historian understood it, and represents it. Josephus, Ant. Jud. l. II. c. 12.

2. We have another account of the appearance of the Shechinah, when *the Lord (Jehovah) went before them (the Israelites) by day, in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.* Exod. xiii. 21, 22.

The long continuance of this appearance, and its conformity to the Shechinah of the tabernacle and temple, recommend it to a particular observation.

"I can see no reason," says Bishop

Patrick, "to suppose these were different "clouds, since one and the same would "serve for both purposes; that is, the "same pillar appearing by night as fire, "which in the day was like a cloud." And this seems to be intimated by Moses himself: *And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these; so that the one came not near the other all the night.* Or, as Mr. Ainsworth observes from the Jerusalem Targum, the cloud was half light and half dark. The light gave light to Israel, and the darkness gave darkness to the Egyptians, like a cloud enlightened by the sun shining strong upon it on one side, but dark on the other side, the sun not being able to pierce through it: thus the same cloud may become either light or dark, by changing the dark and light sides for each other.

Exod. xiv. 20.

The form of this appearance has been thought by many to have some resemblance to a pillar or column in building, because it is called a pillar of cloud, and a pillar of fire; but the original word signifies more generally strength and stability, or a fixed posture: hence the Greek interpreters translate it station, or attendance, as does our version in many places. In this sense the word pillar will not so much denote the form and dimensions of the cloud,

עמוד from עמד stetit, mansit. στασις.

as the stationary attendance of it, to lead them the way. The shape of the cloud seems nearer the shape of a natural cloud spread over a large part of the sky, and of such thickness, that one side of it might be strongly enlightened, at the same time the other remained dark; or, according to the Jerusalem Targum, it (the cloud) came between the camp of the Israelites and the camp of the Egyptians; and the cloud was half light, and half darkness; from one side it darkened the Egyptians, and from the other side it enlightened the Israelites.

It will be proper to observe in this representation of the Schechinah, that the Mischan, the place of the habitation, or seat of the presence, is plainly represented in such a manner as to be designed a symbol of divine providence, direction, and protection, as well as of the presence of Jehovah in general. It gave the Israelites light by night, and shadowed them from the scorching heat by day; it led them in their way, and conducted them in safety. The Prophets therefore chose this symbol to express the security and happiness of the church, under God's direction, protection, and blessing. *And the Lord (Jehovah) will create, upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence; and*

Ainsworth on the place.

there shall be a tabernacle in the daytime
Isaiah, iv. *from the heat, and for a place of refuge,*
5, 6. *and for a cover from storm and from rain.*

When God visibly appeared on Mount Sinai, and gave his law to Israel, it is re-
Exod. presented after this manner: *There were*
xix. 16. *thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.—And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire;*
18. *and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked*
19. *greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.* You see, in this representation, an exact conformity of a cloud, fire, and a voice, with the former descriptions of the Shechinah.

I omit the other appearances of the Shechinah, except one, which is the standing appearance in the sanctuary.

When the tabernacle was set up, and all its ornaments placed in it, and Moses had finished the work, *then a cloud covered the seat of the congregation, and the*
Exod. xl. *glory of the Lord (Jehovah) filled the ta-*
33, 34. *bernacle.* How you are to conceive this cloud of glory, is further explained: *for the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night,*

in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journies. The continuance of the cloud on the tabernacle, or the taking of it up from over the tabernacle, was the imperial signal of marching, or resting in the camp. Exod. xl. 38. 36, 37.

By this description it should seem that the cloud and glory, or cloud of glory, was both within and without the tabernacle; for the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; so that, when the signal for marching was given to the Israelites, the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, which shows there was a cloud over the tabernacle without, as well as the cloud filling the tabernacle within; which Bishop Patrick thus conceives: "The cloud and glory of "the Lord were not two different things, "but one and the same, as the pillar of "cloud and of fire were; it was outwardly "a cloud, and inwardly a fire; and ac- "cordingly here the external part of it "covered the tabernacle without, while "the internal part shone with a bright "fire, or glory, within the house."

The description we have of the entrance of the Shechinah into Solomon's temple, will illustrate this account of it, with which it is the same in most things, though in some things more particular: *The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord (Jehovah) into his place, into the* 1 Kings, viii. 6.

oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.—

1 Kings, viii. 10. *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud*

11. *filled the house of the Lord (Jehovah); so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (Jehovah).*

The more immediate seat of this presence, or Shechinah, is expressly determined in the ritual: *And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee, and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between*

Exod. xxv. 21, 22. *the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony.*

Why light the symbol of the Presence. But why, may some ask, were light, flame, and fire, chosen for the figure, or symbol, or the Presence? Suppose no other reason could be given but this, that since some form of visible appearance was to be chosen, it was free to choose any that was fit; and that light seems, at least, as fit, and as proper, as any other.

Tennison of Idolatry, p. 316. It was well observed by a learned author, "Jamblicus, in his book of the Egyp-
" tian mysteries, setteth out, by light, the
" power, the simplicity, the penetration,
" the ubiquity of God.—Maimonides sup-
" poseth the matter of the heavens to have

" risen from the extension of the vestment " of divine light, represented as the gar- " ment of God, it having been said by Da- " vid, that he covereth himself with light " as with a garment, *Psalm* civ. 2. Such " sayings," says Archbishop Tennison, " though they have in them a mixture of " extravagance, yet in the main they teach " the same with the Scripture, that God is " light, or, that there is nothing in the cre- " ation so fit an emblem of him, and so fit " to be used in his appearance to the " world." The sun, then, as the greatest and brightest light in the heavens, might have been pitched upon by Zoroaster as the throne and residence of the Divine Presence, though he had not learned the notion of a Shechinah, by conversation with the Hebrews at Babylon. The world, in general, might more easily agree to make that glorious luminary the sun their Kebla, or place to which they directed their worship, for this single reason, that it appeared the brightest and most glorious body in the heavens, the likeliest residence they could think of for their gods.

When, therefore, it pleased Jehovah to appoint a visible emblem of his extraordinary presence, light, flame, fire, were a very fit mark of it, especially when such extraordinary light was not only equal to the light of the sun in its greatest brightness, but even far exceeded it. When the

Schechinah appeared to St. Paul, he observes, *he could not see for the glory of the light;* or, as he explained it to king Agrippa, *At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me.* Such a glorious created light as could outshine the brightness of the sun at mid-day, seems a very proper emblem of the particular presence of Jehovah, who is often and significantly represented as light. Light is so often used to signify understanding and truth, in opposition to ignorance and error, represented by darkness, that, without straining a metaphor, it may be used to signify the fountain of light, of understanding and truth, of favour and blessing. The use of this metaphor by the Psalmist and the Prophets, will show it had a plain, easy meaning; for who does not understand the blessing appointed by the ritual for the children of Israel; *The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.* Thus, then, you conceive the appearance of the Shechinah; it was a bright and glorious light, fixed in the tabernacle and temple in the most holy place, over the ark and mercy-seat, between the cherubim of glory, to express and signify the presence of the

Acts, xxii. 11.

Acts, xxvi. 13.

Num. vi. 25,26,27.

Lord (Jehovah) among his people to bless them.

2. The tabernacle and temple were also a considerable part of the Hebrew ritual, in which the Schechinah, the visible appearance of the Presence, was to be fixed; a consideration of which will show us the manner in which the presence of Jehovah was to be received into his sanctuary. This place, made holy by the presence of Jehovah, as the place where he put his name, and caused his glory to dwell, is often therefore styled the Court of God, and the House of God. It was to the Divine Presence inhabiting this sanctuary as his palace, all the worship of the church was to be offered, by express direction of the ritual itself, as residing there in the character of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whose covenant was with this people, as the God and King of Israel. This presence of Jehovah in the temple (not the temple itself, as some weakly imagined) was a foundation of hope in the peculiar favour of Jehovah, for his protection and blessing as their God and King. The Psalmist, speaking of the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High, adds, *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.* And again, *The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.* The Psalmist

Tabernacle and temple.

Psalm xlvi. 4, 5.

therefore addresses his prayer to Jehovah, as present in the sanctuary: *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth: before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.* The tabernacle and temple were so manifestly of the same nature, meaning, and use, that a consideration of either will equally give us the true intention of both.

Psalm lxxx. 1, 2.

Whencesoever it was that temples had their original, or when they first came into use, is of little consequence, I apprehend, to our present inquiry. Whether the wisdom of God condescended to adopt a custom already in use before the giving of the law, as some have thought (though not very easy to prove), or whether this fixing the presence of Jehovah among the children of Israel gave occasion to the nations, neighbours to the Hebrews, to honour the presence of their gods in like manner, is, I think, hardly worth a long inquiry. It will be sufficient to take notice briefly of what the Hebrew ritual plainly directs as to this part of the worship; for, these are what God thought fit to appoint by his own authority, and will appear to have sufficient reasons for their establishment, whether they had been in use, or had not been in use, before.

I might observe, with respect to the

Egyptian chronology, that all parts of their history, so high as the Exodus and times of Moses, are very uncertain at least, if not certainly antedated; and that all reports of the Greek historians concerning their affairs are too late in time, and their informations too imperfect, to have any authority, at the utmost can give but very weak conjectures. To leave, then, such uncertainties, it is well observed, on more certain principles, "that two things are es- "sential to the proper notion of a temple; "the one, that it must be some house "or place separated for the use of some "deity, and consecrated by some solemn "rites of religion to the worship of it; "the other, that it was a place where the "deity dwelt, and manifested an extraordi- "nary presence in some way not common "and usual *." Thus the Psalmist represents the seat of God's presence, *until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*

Nature of a temple.

Psalm cxxxii. 5.

The mystery of the tabernacle, says Dr. Cudworth, was fully understood by the learned Nachmanides, who, in few words, but pregnant, thus expresses it: The mystery of the tabernaele was this, that it was to be a place for the Shechinah, or habita-

Cudworth on the Lord's Supper, c. vi. p. 31.

* E jam dictis intelligitur duo essentialiter requiri, ad templum constituendum, nempe dei *proprietatem*, et ejusdem *inhabitationem*, aut presentiam singularem. —*Spencer*, l. iii. dissert. vi. p. 284, 286.

tion of Divinity, to be fixed in; and this, adds Dr. Cudworth, no doubt, as a special type of God's future dwelling in Christ's human nature, which was the true Shechinah.

You observe then, in general, that all the magnificence of the tabernacle and temple, of its buildings, ornaments, vessels, ministers, attendants, offerings, sacrifices, and every part of the worship, which the ritual directed to be performed only at the temple, was on account of the Schechinah residing in the temple; therefore God himself gives this direction, *And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them, according to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle.*

Exodus, xxv. 8, 9.

The ritual further directs the tabernacle should be built with the richest materials, *boards of Shittim wood, overlaid with gold, sockets of silver, rings of gold, and bars overlaid with gold, vails of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work.* In Solomon's temple the whole house was *overlaid within with pure gold.* Particular directions are given for the building of the sanctuary, for making the mercy-seat, the ark, the table, the altar, the candlesticks, and the several vessels that were to be placed in the holy place.

Exodus, xxvi.

1 Kings, vi. 21.

The temple itself was divided into two rooms, an outward and an inward: the

outward room was called the holy place; the inward, the holy of holies, the most holy place, and the oracle. The LXX have not translated the original word, for what reason I cannot conceive, when they had a well-known one so ready at hand, by which they might have expressed the meaning of the original, fully and clearly; as the place from whence the oracle of God was given, or the WORD of Jehovah went forth. 1 Kings, vi. 19. דביר λογιον.

This most holy place was a room of state of equal length, breadth, and height, or a cube of about twenty cubits (near thirty foot), all overlaid with pure gold. The holy place, or outward room, as an antechamber to the Presence, was of equal breadth of twenty cubits (near thirty foot), but as long again, or forty cubits (near sixty foot): both these were ornamented in the highest manner with the richest materials. Some consider the magnificence and ornaments of these two rooms, as chiefly, if not only, meant as a furniture fit for the rooms of state, in which the King of Israel was to appear and manifest his presence by his glory. Yet others consider them as intended for instruction, designed to explain more distinctly the nature, design, meaning, and use of the Presence itself. 20. 17.

If you first consider the holy place, you will observe there were prepared for the

furniture of that room a golden table, a golden candlestick or lamp, and a golden altar. And he (Moses) put the *table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward without the vail;* or to the right hand of the entrance into the holy place, the holy place fronting the east, as we shall presently see. *And he put the candlestick (or golden lamp) in the tent of the congregation, over against the table on the side of the tabernacle southward;* that is, on the left hand of the entrance into the holy place; and, finally, *He put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the vail;* that is, in the middle of the holy place, near the end of the room or entrance into the most holy place or oracle.

Exodus, xl. 22.

24.

Exodus, xl. 26.

Here it will be proper to observe the situation of the sanctuary, with respect to the points of the heavens. The holy, and most holy place, were to the west of the entrance, or the building fronted to the east. So Ezekiel represents the idolatry of the Israelites: *Behold at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar were about five and twenty men, with their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun towards the east.* Dr. Spencer thinks, this situation of the Hebrew temple might be taken from a custom of the Egyptians, to place their

Ezekiel, viii. 16.

Spencer, l. III. c. 11. Dissert. vi. p. 310.

temples in like manner; but does not the Prophet intimate a truer reason, the custom and practice of the idolatrous worshippers of the sun to worship him toward the east?

Some, I believe, are justly charged with finding more mysteries in these things than the ritual designed. It should teach caution not to indulge imagination, but not make us conclude too hastily, they have no meaning at all. Dr. Cudworth, from one of the Hebrew doctors, observes, concerning the things thus placed in the sanctuary; "The temple being as an house "for God to dwell in visibly, to make up "the notion of dwelling, or habitation, "complete, there must be all things suitable to an house belonging to it; hence, "in the holy place, there must be a table "and a candlestick, because this was the "ordinary furniture of a room, as the "forementioned Nachmanides observes; "he addeth a table and a candlestick, because those suit the notion of a dwelling-house." Cudworth on the Lord's Supper, c. vi. p. 31.

You will observe yet further, that the golden table for the shew-bread was as an altar on which was laid an offering, in the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; so the ritual directs, *And thou shalt take fine flour, aad bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth-deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a* Leviticus, xxiv. 5, 6, 7.

row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. It seems, as Bishop Patrick observes, an offering made by fire unto the Lord, because the frankincense which was put on each row of the cakes, was burned as an oblation to God, when the bread was eaten by the priests. The shew-bread then, and the frankincense upon it, were properly offerings of the whole nation of Israel to Jehovah their God. The ritual appointed meat and drink offerings, as well as sacrifices of birds and beasts. The Apostle to the Hebrews alludes to the distinction of sacrifices, gifts, and offerings. If animals were offered, they were called sacrifices, זבחים; or if the fruits of the earth, flour, oil, wine, frankincense, were offered, were called offerings; meat-offerings and drink-offerings, מנחות and נסכים. Hence you see the reason why a table and altar have much the same signification, according to the Prophet, *But ye have profaned it in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.*

Hebrews, viii. 3.

Reland, Ant. Heb. p. 290.

Mal. i. 12.

You see reason to consider the golden altar of incense in like manner, as it stood nearest the most holy place, separated from it, and the Presence in it, only by a vail, or curtain. Upon this golden altar,

incense was offered every day, morning and evening. "A figure," says Mr. Lightfoot, "if you apply the action to Christ, of "his mediation, and if to men, a resem- "blance of the duty of prayer." It will be a figurative expression of prayer, or intercession, applied to either: thus the Psalmist uses it, *Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening sacrifice.* St. John, alluding to this part of the ritual, observes, *There was given unto him* (the angel) *much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne: and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.* This explains the custom of the Hebrew church, that, when the incense was offering on the golden altar, the congregation of Israel was at their prayers, or *the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.* The ascending up of the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, may well signify the acceptance of their prayers, and that Jehovah as their God would answer their prayers, continuing to protect and bless them. By these actions, then, the whole church of Israel worshipped Jehovah, offered a tribute of honour to him, as Governor of the world, as their God and King, who received them

Light-foot, Temple, c. xiv. § 6.

Ps. cxli. 2.

Rev. viii. 3, 4.

Luke, i. 10.

as guests to his table—a proper rite to express his favour, and covenant with them.

Cudworth, ib. p. 30.

"For the eating of sacrifices, which were "God's meat," as Dr. Cudworth justly observes, "was a federal rite, between God "and those that did partake of them, and "signified there was a covenant of friendship between him and them."

Lightfoot, Temple, c. xiv. § 4.

Besides this golden table and altar, the ritual appointed a golden candlestick—this candlestick, or branch of lamps, for it had seven branches, one straight shaft in the middle, and three branches going out from the middle branch, on each side, at proper distances, and with proper ornaments, according to the description of Moses:

Exodus, xxxvii. 17, 18.

He made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers were of the same: and six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof.

Lightfoot, Temple Service, c. ix. § 3, 5.

These seven lamps, so called, ver. 23, were dressed and lighted every day at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, and offering of incense on the golden altar: from hence it should seem, it was intended to express some part of the honour and worship given to God by the church, rather than a symbol of some blessing of the Presence, with the church; though

the Presence, in general, was a symbol of special grace and favour. Dr. Lightfoot's remark is not therefore very certain: the perpetual light (of the lamps) resembled the word and doctrine of salvation, the light of the Lord, in which we see light. The Scriptures make the candlesticks, or lamps, to resemble the churches; so they are explained to St. John in his vision: *And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are (signify) the seven churches.* Rev. i. 20. The two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth, are interpreted of the two witnesses, which were to prophesy during the period of anti-christian corruption, in defence of true religion and true Christianity. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.* Rev. xi. 3, 4. The representation of them as olive-trees and candlesticks, seems taken from the prophecy of Zechariah. The Prophet beheld the candlestick all of gold, and his seven lamps, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, and two olive-trees, one of each side; these are explained to be *the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.* Zech. iv. 2, 3. 14. These signify (says Mr. Lowth, very justly) the kingdom and the priesthood, as they were exercised by Zerubbabel and Joshua. The candlestick represented the Jewish church; the olive- Lowth on the place.

trees, a supply of oil, to keep it bright and burning: and, to stand before the Lord, is the same as to minister to him. Light, as a proper emblem of truth and understanding, of purity and holiness, might be an emblem of God's presence in the church; and so it was; but I conceive not in the candlestick, but in the glorious light of the Shechinah. The candlestick, as an emblem of the church, rather seems designed to express with what truth and purity, understanding and holiness, the church should worship God, how a people consecrated to God's honour and service, should appear as burning and shining lights in the world.

Josephus has suggested a thought which deserves notice, as coming from such an author—that these seven lamps, as they were according to the number of the seven planets, so they were designed to represent them, and so teach, that these glorious lights of heaven, as creatures of the one God, the sole Creator of all things in heaven and earth, are to be considered joining with the church in showing forth his praises. So far are these stars from deserving religious worship, that they pay religious honour to the one God, who alone is to be worshipped. It is left to every one what credit is to be given to this opinion of Josephus; it was fit to mention it, as he was himself an Hebrew, and well acquainted with the history and rites of his nation.

Josephus, Antiq. Jud. l. III. c. x.

Next to the holy place was the oracle, or most holy place: this will deserve particular attention; for here was the presence, the Shechinah, the glory of Jehovah, between the cherubim, over the mercy-seat, or the covering of the ark. Ritual of the most holy place.

The ritual directs this ark *to be made of Shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.* The ark, then, was a chest or cabinet made of the finest wood, overlaid with gold, near four foot long, and somewhat above two foot in breadth and in height: round about this cabinet, at the top, was a crown or coronet of gold, in part as an ornament, and in part to keep the mercy-seat steady, which was to be placed in it to cover the ark. Exod. xxv. 10, 11.

The mercy-seat is directed to be made of pure gold, as the ark itself, and just of the same length and breadth. The original word we translate mercy-seat, may signify either a covering or an expiation; as, in the language of Scripture, to cover sins, means the same thing as to forgive them. The LXX have joined both these senses together, and expressed them by two distinct words. And there is full reason to show, the כפרת Psalm xxxii. 1. Ἱλαστηριον, επιθημα.

word in the original was intended in both senses, as a covering and as a propitiatory.

The use of this ark is further explained in the ritual: *And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee; and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee.* The ark is therefore styled the ark of the testimony, and very frequently the ark of the covenant, because the tables of the covenant were put into it. Here also was the pot of manna laid up before the Lord, with Aaron's rod that budded. These well preserved the memory of God's faithfulness to his covenant with this people, and the authority of his constitutions with them, in settling their priesthood, worship, and ritual; and of his mercy towards them, when his presence was over the mercy-seat, the propitiatory and covering of the ark, in which the tables of the law were placed, as the holy rule of his government, but covered with a mercy-seat, an emblem of his grace.

Exodus, xxv. 21, 22.

Heb. ix. 4. Exodus, xvi. 33.

It is further to be observed, concerning this ark, and its covering the mercy-seat, *And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And,* says the ritual, *make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims*

Exodus, xxv. 18, 19, 20.

shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; towards the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. Here was the presence and oracle, between the wings of the cherubim, and the mercy-seat the covering of the ark: from hence the oracle, or word of Jehovah, was given; or, as one well expresses it, hence Jehovah spake to the children of Israel by his Shechinah, or oracle, as from his imperial throne, *more imperatorio de tribunali loquebatur.*

There are many questions not easy to be answered, concerning the form of these cherubims. Josephus was of opinion, no man could tell what they were like, for their form, he says, was not like any thing known by man. Bochart (says Bishop Patrick) seems to me to speak judiciously, when he says they were not figures of angels, but rather emblems, whereby the angelical nature was in some sense expressed. Let Bochart express his own meaning, in his own words. The cherubim were not images of God, as the calves of Jeroboam, nor of any angels, but emblems by which the angelical nature was in some manner expressed *.

Josephus, Ant. Jud. l. VIII. c. ii. § 3.

* Præterea cherubini neque Dei erant imagines, ut vituli Jeroboami, neque angelorum ullius, sed emblemata potius quibus angelica natura utcunque exprimebatur.—*Bochart Hieroz.* P. I. c. xxxiv. vol. ii. p. 308.

If we take the form of the cherubim, from the description in Ezekiel or the Revelation, we shall find such a mixed form, of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, with such a position of wings, hands, and feet, as seems evidently to teach, the cherubim were not designed to be a likeness of any creature whatsoever, but as a figurative and emblematical representation of some qualities of the beings designed by them.

Thus, when the glorious light of the Shechinah represented the majesty of Jehovah, who is light, and with whom there is no darkness; the form of the cherubim might represent the angels of God, according to a great author, the highest beings in knowledge and power, next to God *. Hence, the strength of a lion, the useful labour of an ox, the wisdom of a man, the quick sight and swift motion of an eagle, were proper and significant emblems of such knowledge and power, in which the angels of God excelled.

The most judicious of the Hebrew masters gives this as the meaning of the cherubim, and explains by it the reason of placing them over the mercy-seat, in the most holy place; to confirm the doctrine of angels, and to teach this as an article of faith, that all the angels of God, of what

* Summam secundum Deum, scientiam, et potentiam angelorum.—*Spencer.*

dignity, order, or power soever, as they were the creatures of Jehovah, so they were the servants of Jehovah, ministers attendant on his presence, in particular to execute his will, and acts of grace, as God and King of Israel*. How agreeable to this is the representation of the Psalmist! *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place.* And again: *And he (Jehovah) bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet; and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly.* Or again: *Bless ye the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.*

Maimon. Mor. Nev. P. III. c. xlv. p. 476.

Psalm lxxviii. 17.

Psalm xviii. 9, 10.

Psalm ciii. 20, 21.

* Ad hujus rei confirmationem, præcepit Deus supra arcam duorum angelorum figuram facere, ad existentiam angelorum in animis hominum confirmandam, quæ secundus est articulus scientiæ, post fidem existentiæ Dei, principiumque prophetiæ et legis, quod si una tantum figura fuisset, h. e. unius tantum cherubini forma. Id facile errandi causam præbuisset, existimare enim quis potuisset, ac si esset figura Dei colendi, sicut idololatræ faciunt, vel quasi angelus unicum tantum esset individuum, atque ita in multiplices errores inducere. Duos autem cherubinos faciens, cum hac declaratione, Dominus Deus noster, Deus unus, extra omne dubium, istos articulos posuit, quod angeli existant, et illorum sunt multi, deinde omnem causam errandi vel cogitandi, ac si illi Dei essent sustulit, declarando, quod Deus sit unus, et quod ille hos multos creavit.—*Maimon. Mor. Neb.* P. III. c. xlv. p. 476.

This part of the ritual, then, taught the being of angels, an order of spirits of higher dignity, of greater power and perfection than ourselves, or our own spirits; but teaches at the same time, they were not to be honoured as Gods, for all were the creatures, and servants of the one true God, the only object of worship.

Hence you perceive the reason of the ritual of the Presence. The Shechinah, or glory of Jehovah over the mercy-seat, between the wings of the cherubim, is made the sole kebla of the Hebrew church, the place to which alone, all the temple service and worship were to be addressed. Before the Presence, therefore, was the only altar; there all the rites of worship were performed: hence the Psalmist, when he exhorts to the worship of God, uses such expressions as these, *Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool. Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill.*

Psalm xcix. 5, 9.

Here God appears in the glory of his greatness and holiness, of his mercies and his grace, as we shall more clearly perceive, when we come to apply this part of the ritual to the designs for which this law of Moses was given.

CHAP. III.

Ritual of the Hebrew Worship.

You have seen the ritual of the holy, and most holy place, the seat of the Presence, and kebla of worship; consider now the worship itself, as directed by the ritual. This was to be performed in the courts of the temple. Just before the temple there was a space of ground 187 cubits long from west to east, and 135 from north to south, near 300 foot long by 200 broad. This fore-court of the temple was divided into two; the court of the priests was that nearest the temple, and divided from the other, or court of Israel, by steps, and a balustrade, or sort of rails. In the inward court of the priests was the great altar of sacrifice. There is a general direction concerning altars: *An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.* Some have ap-

Ritual of the worship.

Lightfoot, Temple, c. xvi.

Ib. c. xxxvii.

Exod. xx. 24, 25, 26.

plied this direction to the altar, before the Presence, in the tabernacle, or temple; but it seems rather to refer to such altars as they were allowed to make for themselves before the tabernacle was erected; for, this direction was given before the directions for the tabernacle. Altars made of turfs or loose stones were very proper for them while travelling in the wilderness; they were soon set up, and soon taken down, nor was it proper they should be left standing, lest the people should be tempted to use them as already consecrated, in neglect of the only altar before the Presence.

Exodus, xxvii.1,2. There is a particular order of the ritual for making this altar. *And thou shalt make an altar of Shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad: the altar shall be four-square, and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass.* This was the altar for the tabernacle, which was to be moveable with it; but when the temple was the fixed seat of the Presence, and the altar thereby immoveable, the dimensions of it are enlarged, and the materials seem to be all of brass.

2 Chron. iv. 1.

Exodus, xxx. 18, 19, 20. The ritual directed also to place a laver of brass, or a vessel to hold a quantity of water for Aaron, and his sons, to wash

with, for the same uses as afterwards Solomon's molten sea, a much larger vessel, was placed in the court of the temple. Here, then, the ritual appointed the Hebrew worship to be performed; but for a better understanding of it, it will be necessary to consider it in particular where two things are of principal consideration, the ministers of the Hebrew worship, and the services they performed before the Presence.

Ritual of the priests and Levites.

The first thing, then, to be considered is the ritual of the persons appointed for the service of the tabernacle and temple: these were the tribe of Levi, which tribe was taken from among the other tribes of Israel to minister before God. They were *appointed over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it. They were therefore to have no portion in the inheritance of the land. God was their part; for he gave the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve.* The Levites were by an act of the children of Israel consecrated to this service, to perform it as for them, and in their name. So Moses is directed by the oracle: *And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites, and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, for an offering of*

Numb. i. 50.

Numb. xviii. 20, 21.

Numb. viii. 10, 11.

the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord. This reason of consecrating the Levites, is more distinct: *For they (the Levites) are wholly given unto me, from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the first-born of all the children of Israel, I have taken them unto me. For all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast; on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for myself. And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel.* In giving the whole tribe of Levi in the room of the first-born of the children of Israel, here was a very useful memorial, besides other great reasons, of a very memorable act of God's power and goodness, which laid them under peculiar engagements to the service and honour of Jehovah, as their God. This service of the Levites is however appointed a lower service, as they were *a gift to Aaron and his sons, to do the service of the children of Israel:* which they were to have performed, if the Levites had not been taken in their room. But Aaron and his sons were placed in an higher degree: so the oracle to Moses, *And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to me in the priest's office.* Hence

Num. viii. 16.

17.

18.

19.

Exodus, xxviii. 1.

it appears the Hebrew ritual appointed one of the tribes of Israel for the service of God at the tabernacle, and one family of that tribe to minister in the priest's office before God.

Ritual of the priesthood, or ministers before the Presence. 1 Chron. xxiii. 13.

What was the general nature of the priest's office we learn from the description of the office of Aaron: *And Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever.*

As there was a distinction between the Priests and Levites, there was also a distinction among themselves. Aaron and his successors, as high priests, had many peculiar privileges, above the other priests. They had a precedency in rank and dignity, were distinguished by richer garments, and by some of the more solemn acts of service, which none were privileged to perform but the high priest alone; as to enter into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, and to consult by the Urim and Thummim. As this was the first minister of religion in the Hebrew worship, the ritual is careful to give many directions concerning his qualifications, his consecration, and performance of his office, of very good use, as will afterwards more fully appear, to preserve the knowledge of the true God and of true religion, to prevent the prevalence of idolatry, and to

prepare the way for the Messiah, who was to be a greater high priest, as well as of a better order than this of Aaron.

1. Then the ritual has prescribed some previous qualifications, before they could be admitted into their office. Whatever might have been lawful, or in use or practice, before this ritual, with respect to offering of sacrifices, the case was altered, when the ritual confined it to the family of Aaron, even with exclusion to all the other families of the same tribe of Levi. Before this constitution, as learned men have observed, it is most probable, every person was a priest, so far as to offer sacrifices for himself; so Cain and Abel offered their own sacrifices; nor is there any reason to think they brought them to Adam, as head and prince of the family, to offer for them. But in sacrifices that were not personal, and which were offered for families, it is likely the head and father of the family acted as priest: so Noah and Job offered sacrifices, each as father and priest of their families. Moreover, when sacrifices were offered for yet larger societies, consisting of several families, as cities or nations, the custom seems to have been, as most natural and rational, that the prince, or chief of such society, offered the public sacrifices to God. So Moses, as prince of Israel, at the consecration of Aaron and his sons, not only invested him with the

Outram de Sacrif. l. I. c. 4. § 3.

priest's garments, and anointed him with the anointing oil, to sanctify him, but he slew the offering; *and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.* In like manner he had before offered the public sacrifice, in confirmation of the covenant between Jehovah and the people, *Exod.* xxiv. 6, &c. This easy and short remark will, I think, show what was the custom in the most ancient times, and explain the reason why different persons are represented as the priests or sacrificers. Levit. viii. 15.

But when Moses had invested Aaron and his sons in the priest's office, it belonged only to them to offer: *They shall wait on their priest's office,* says the ritual, *and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.* Every one was a stranger, according to the ritual, who was not of the sons of Aaron, though they were of his tribe, the tribe of Levi. So it is explained in the case of Korah and his company, who were so exemplarily punished for seeking the priesthood. Their censers were hallowed for a sign unto the children of Israel, *to be a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord.* Numb. iii. 10. Numb. xvi. 38, 40.

It was then a necessary qualification for the priest's office to be of the seed of Aaron; Qualifications for the

priest's office, by the ritual.

besides which, there were also some other considerations of their birth and persons, to qualify them for the execution of their office, as the priests of Jehovah, for the honour of a family made holy by a near approach to the Presence; to remove idolatrous customs, and to prevent the invention of more.

Ritual of the priests' marriages. Levit. xxi. 7. 14.

The ritual therefore directs, *They shall not take a wife that is an whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband, for he is holy unto his God.* The law for the high priest goes further, and appoints, a *widow, or a devorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these he shall not take, but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.*

This ritual directs an extraordinary and more than common care to preserve the families of the priests in reputation and honour, from every thing that might disgrace them as profane, or lessen the distinguishing dignity of their office, and so dishonour the name of Jehovah too; *as the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, is said to profane her father also.* To preserve, then, the honour of this family, and keep it from any mark of disgrace, they are not to marry any profane person, or a person born of a marriage declared by the ritual profane, as the daughter of a priest, by a woman that had been divorced, or a profane person;

9.

who, according to Selden, is a person born of a woman whom it was not lawful for a priest to marry*.

The Hebrew masters, according to the same learned author, understand by a whore, any woman who is not an Israelite, or an Israelite with whom a man had lain, whom she could not marry according to law, or who had lain with a profane person†.

The Romans were used to regard the honour of marriages, so that none were accounted honourable or lawful, but between citizens. The like constitutions were in Greece, and other cities eminent for their wisdom. Now, to preserve the honour of a family, especially ennobled by the immediate service of the God and King of Israel, would much serve to excite a care to keep up the purity and dignity of their character, and the respect due to it. Here is nothing appointed, but what the wisest nations have accounted honourable; nothing like the monstrous constitutions of the Magians, that they were fittest for the highest offices of priesthood, who were the issue of

Alexand. ab Alexandro, l. ii. c. 5.

* Quæ nata est ex iis quæ sacerdotibus jungi rite nequeant, profanus est, qui nascitur ex coitu sacerdoti interdicto.—*Selden de Success. in Pontif.* Vol. II. lib. ii. c. 2. p. m. 158.

† Zona (seu scortum) in lege memoratum, fœmina est quæcunque non est Israelitis, aut Israelitis, quacum concubuit vir, cujus nuptiæ ei ex interdicto omnium communi interdicuntur, aut quocum concubuit profanus. —*Idem, ibid.* p. m. 159.

the most detestable incests, whose mothers conceived by their own sons. It was worthy the care of this ritual to remove all such evil customs, and prevent the introduction of any like them, for the future.

To be free from all natural blemish.

The ritual, for the further honour of the priests' character, required them to be free from any natural defect or blemish in their bodies, which might make their appearance in their high office mean and despicable in the eyes of the people: *Therefore the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Whosoever he be that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God; for whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach.* The particulars, to avoid mistakes or uncertainties, are set down, and may be seen in the following verses.

Levit. xxi. 16, 17, 18.

The ritual here provides for the greater honour and dignity of the service of the sanctuary. It permits those who had natural blemishes, but which were not moral defects, *to eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy; only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish, that he profane not my sanctuaries.*

22, 23.

These natural infirmities were not considered, as Bishop Patrick observes, as legal impurities, rather as incapacities for the exercise of their office; and herein, says Ainsworth, the blemished had a privilege above the unclean, who might not eat of

the holy things. However, as such blemishes made it unseemly for them to officiate before the Presence, the ritual took care the service should be performed in a manner more expressive of reverence to the presence of Jehovah. The decency, in this respect, so long settled in the courts and presence of princes, will easily point out the respect and honours due to the court and presence of Jehovah, which always carry with them moral instructions of great and profitable use, as we shall more fully see, in its proper place.

Consecration to the office of priests.

2. The ritual required of all who were found worthy to minister in the priest's office, that they should be regularly invested in it, and settled in particular all the rites of investiture. This put a stop to all imaginations of their own, and to all superstitious and idolatrous ceremonies, which the maxims and customs of their neighbour heathen nations might introduce, either as to the nature of their idols and dæmons, or as to the service and worship supposed most acceptable to them, in which there were many magical rites, in particular as to the form and colour of the garments in which they officiated; in which they placed great hopes of better acceptance, and fell into many dangerous superstitions. The ritual of consecration is therefore wisely very particular, though it consisted principally in the following things, of easy and instruc-

tive meaning, as well as most proper to prevent all superstitious rites and idolatrous customs.

These chief rites were, washing them with water, putting on the garments of their priest's office, applying the blood of the ram of consecration to their ear, their hand, and their foot, and anointing them with oil. And at the beginning, when Aaron and his sons were first consecrated, there was an acceptance of them to minister in the priest's office, by the glory of Jehovah, or the Shechinah, before the whole congregation of Israel.

Let us see briefly how the Scriptures themselves describe this part of the ritual.

Levit. viii. 1, 2, 3. *And the Lord (Jehovah) spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock, for a sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread, and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.* When Moses had done as the Lord directed, and the general assembly of Israel was met, he acquainted 5. them, this was *what Jehovah had commanded to be done;* so that the following investiture was performed by Moses, the whole congregation of Israel present, as Exodus, xix. 8. consenting and assisting; as if they had said, as on a like occasion, *And all the*

people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken unto us we will do.

The first rite made use of by Moses, as the Lord commanded, was this: *And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.* The natural use of water, for cleanliness, to wash off all sorts of dirt or filth, that would soil the body, made it of constant use, and of great service, especially in those warm eastern countries. This was a very easy representation of purity, and might readily be applied to signify purity of heart, as it visibly made the body clean; the use of water, therefore, soon became a religious rite, and was established, as by universal custom and consent, a ceremonial denoting purity of mind, or an heart purged from iniquity. Hence divers baptisms, or kinds of washings, were so common among all nations, as well as with the Hebrews. Thus the Roman poet, so well skilled in the ancient rites and ceremonies of his nation, and of the heathen worship, represents his hero as unfit to carry the images of the gods, while defiled with blood, after a battle, till he should be purged, by washing in running water*. It was a re-

The ritual for washing with water, Levit. viii. 6.

* Tu, genitor, cape sacra manu, patriosque penates.
Me, bello è tanto digressum & cæde recenti,
Attrectare nefas, donec me flumine vivo
Abluero. *Virg. Æneid.* l. II. v. 717.

ceived custom, in like manner, for persons to wash themselves with water, before they sacrificed: whence the common expression, I go to wash myself, that I may sacrifice; I will now wash, that I may perform the sacred offices of religion *.

It was no wonder a rite of so plain meaning, and so proper instruction, should be of so general use, or that the wisdom of God, when it was to give the Hebrews a ritual, should make such use of water, one rite of it, when putting away the filth of the flesh, so properly put them in mind of the answer of a good conscience towards God, as St. Peter reasons concerning Christian baptism.

1 Pet. iii. 21.

It may be proper just to mention here this general observation concerning all the rites of the Mosaical ceremonial, that they are instituted as rites, and to be used as rites only. The instructions they taught, promoted true religion and real goodness, as will appear more fully in another place; but here we are to remark and keep in mind as we go along, that it is a general rule of interpretation of every ceremony of the ritual, that it was fit to give useful in-

* Ego eo lavatum, ut sacrificem. *Plaut. Aulular.* iii. 6. 43. Nunc lavabo, ut rem divinam faciam. *Idem, ibid.* iv. 2. 5.

The reader may see more in Saubert de Sacrificiis, p. 222.

structions, or to guard against idolatry, or prepare for the more perfect and more spiritual state of religion under the Messiah. Thus Moses, in consecrating Aaron and his sons to the priest's office, brought them before the presence of Jehovah, and before the congregation of Israel, *and washed them with water.*

Investing with the priest's garments.

The next rite in the consecration of the priests, was to put on them the proper garments appointed for them in their service: the law gave express command for making these garments; the directions were so particular, that no room might be left for private fancy and invention, or introducing the superstitions of idolatrous worship into the worship of Jehovah. The garments directed by the ritual were eight: four were usually called the linen garments, and were worn by all the priests; the other four were usually called the golden garments, because wrought with gold, together with other very rich materials. *These holy garments, made for glory and for beauty,* were peculiar to the high priest, and only worn by him when he officiated.

Exodus, xxviii. 2.

The use of these garments was required by the ritual, on pain of a very high punishment: *And they shall be upon Aaron and his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar, to minister in the holy place, that they bear not iniquity and*

43.

die; it shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him.

The linen garments which were worn by all the priests, were breeches, coats, girdles, and bonnets.

Linen breeches.

Exodus, xxviii. 42.

The ritual directed Moses, *And thou shalt make them (Aaron and his sons) linen breeches, to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.* This rite took care they should be decently covered, whatever gesture of body might be used in their duty, and effectually prevent such indecencies as are observed to have been used as honourable and as religious rites in the worship of Baal-Peor*, that the priests, in officiating, should uncover those parts which common modesty teaches to conceal. Here was a grave and decent garment appointed for the priests, fit for the service of their ministry, and very proper to prevent indecency, either through accident, or superstitious design.

Linen coat.

Exodus, xxviii. 40.

Exod. xxxix. 27.

Another garment appointed for the priests was a linen coat: *And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats;* accordingly, *they made coats of fine linen of woven work, for Aaron and his sons.* This coat is called *a broidered coat,* or a checkered

4.

*. "Gentium quidem profanarum flamines, quæ occultari maxime decebat, coram Pehore aperiebant," says Dr. Outram, from Maimon. and Kimhi. *Outram de Sacrif.* l. I. c. 5. § 3.

linen*, not such as is used for shirts and body-linen, but like diaper or damask, or thick checkered linen, in use for tables.

Another garment directed for the use of the priests, was a girdle, different from the curious girdle of the ephod, one of the garments peculiar to the high priest. This curious girdle of the ephod was made *of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and needle-work.* The common girdle of the priests seems to be plain, without the blue, purple, and scarlet, and seems well described by Dr. Lightfoot, as a long linen swaddle, which many times is about them, over their caps, and downwards; a garment serviceable for warmth and strength. It is usually represented by the Hebrew writers as a sort of linen sash, of about four inches broad, and above sixteen yards long, and so might be wound round their forementioned coats, in very different manners, as occasion should call for.

The priests' girdle.

Exod. xxxix. 29.

Ibid.

The last of the garments appointed for the common priests, were bonnets; *and bonnets shalt thou make for them,* says the ritual: these were a sort of linen caps for the head, represented as a sphere cut in

Priests' bonnets.

Exodus, xxviii. 40.

* The LXX render it χιτωνὰς κοσυμβωτον, wrought, as it were, with knots; Dr. Outram, Camisia utique lino facta, manicata, & opere tesselato texta, quæ ad pedes usque promittebatur; and our learned Dr. Lightfoot calls it a diaper shirt.

Josephus, Antiq. Heb. l. III. c. 8.

two, and one part put on the head*. Josephus represents it as a cap made of linen, twisted several times round, and smoothed by a covering of other linen, by which it was so fastened to the head, that it could not fall off in the time of officiating; so that it seems such a covering of the head as continues the custom of the eastern nations to this day, that is, a sort of turban.

High priest's garments.

Besides these garments of the priests in common, the ritual had provided richer and more glorious garments, for the high priest. These, by way of distinction, were called the golden garments, because wrought with gold, as well as purple and scarlet. These were four—the robe, or robe of the ephod; the ephod; the breast-plate, in which was set the Urim and Thummim; and the golden plate for the mitre.

Robe.

Exodus, xxxviii. 31,32,33.

The ritual directed the robe to be made after this manner: *And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue: and there shall be an hole on the top of it, in the midst thereof; it shall have a binding of woven work, round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. And beneath upon the hem of it, shalt thou make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof;*

* Rotundum pileolum, quasi sphera media sit divisa, & pars una ponatur in capite, tiaram Græci, & nostri appellant.—*Sigonius de Repub. Hebr.* l. V. c. 2.

and bells of gold between them round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister; 34. *and his sound shall be heard, when he goeth* 36. *in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* This coat of the ephod (according to Dr. Lightfoot) "was without any sleeves, and consisted of two pieces, one of which hung before, and the other behind; in the middle there was an opening, through which they put their heads; from the collar, downwards, the pieces were parted, and his arms came out between them; at the lower end of either of these pieces were thirty-six little golden bells, with clappers, and pomegranates of needle-work between every bell: seventy-two bells in all." This robe was blue, or the colour of the air. Hence Josephus and Philo, very reputable authors of the Hebrew nation, represent it a sky-colour, or as a sky-blue. Temple Service, l. III.

Another part of the garments peculiar to the high priest was the ephod: concerning this the ritual directs, *And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. It shall have the two shoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof, even of gold, of* Ephod. Exodus, xxviii. 6—12.

blue, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel, six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth; with the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet shalt thou engrave the two stones, with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, upon his two shoulders, for a memorial.

Temple Service, l. III.

According to Dr. Lightfoot, "the "breadth of this ephod was the breadth of "the back, from shoulder to shoulder, and "it hung behind him, from his arm-holes "to his feet; from it there came two pieces "under his arm-holes, and met together, "and clasped over his paps. It had two "shoulder-pieces also, which went over the "priest's shoulders, and were fastened to "the ephod behind, and to the girdle be-"fore, and so the ephod hung low behind, "and came but short before. Upon these "shoulder-pieces were two beryl-stones, "in which the names of the twelve tribes "were engraven. Upon these shoulder-"pieces there were two bosses of gold, near "to these stones, into which two gold

" chains, which tied the breast-plate to the " ephod, were fastened, that the breast- " plate and ephod might not be parted."

The breast-plate, with the Urim and Thummim placed in it, was another garment peculiarly appointed for the high priest. The ritual thus directed: *And thou shalt make the breast-plate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen thou shalt make it.* It was to be a span square; four rows of stones were to be set in it, and the stones were to be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, that they be according to the twelve tribes.*

Breast-plate with Urim and Thummim. Exodus, xxviii. 15. Exodus, xxviii. 15. 21.

It is directed also, this breast-plate should have chains and rings of gold, by which it was to be fastened to the ephod, that the breast-plate be not parted from the ephod. This breast-plate, then, according to Dr. Lightfoot*, " was a rich piece of " cloth of gold, an hand-breadth square, " double, and set with twelve precious " stones, in four rows, three in a row: " these," he adds, " are called Urim and

Ibid.

* Huic insertæ erant 12 gemmæ per 4 ordines digestæ, quibus insculptæ erant nomina filiorum Israelis, quas ipsas nomine אורם ותמים appellatas fuisse, videtur liquere ex Exod. xxxv. 9, & collatis Exod. xxxix. 10, Levit. viii. 8.—*Reland Ant. Heb.* Part II. c. i. p. 152.

"Thummim, *Exod.* xxviii. 30." Most learned men agree with Dr. Lightfoot in this opinion; Reland, in particular, gives some reasons to confirm it, as what alone is according to the pattern and directions given by the law: and it must seem very strange, that the law should be quite silent on a part of the priest's garments, of so principal use as the Urim and Thummim, when it is so particular in every other part.

Patrick on Levit. viii. 8.

"It is observable," says Bishop Patrick, "that he (Moses) saith nothing here in "this place of the precious stones, but only "mentions Urim and Thummim; as in *Ex-* "*odus*, xxxix. 10, where he describes the "same thing, he makes mention only of "the four rows of stones, but saith not "one word of Urim and Thummim; which "I look upon as a proof they were all "one." This seems more likely than the conjectures of some learned men, without any authority from the ritual itself, and founded only on very uncertain criticism. Some have imagined they were a kind of teraphim, or two little images, which gave the oracle. So Spencer represents the opinion of Castro*. He differs from him, as supposing but one image, not two; and

* Non à veritate, sine ratione saltem speciosa aberravit author noster, cum simulachra duo quorum unum Urim, alterum Thummim dicebatur, ad hoc oraculi tradendi munus, consecrasse, dixerit.—*Spencer*, l. III. *Dissert.* vii. 353.

his own sentiments he thus expresses, that Urim was an hollow instrument, or a little image in human shape, formerly called theraphim*; and that Thummin was taken from a custom among the Egyptians, where the chief judge was used to wear a collar round his neck, to which was fixed a sapphire image called Truth, as he observes from Ælian and Diodorus †. Le Clerc represents it as a collar of jewels, of precious stones and pearls, which hung round the high priest's neck, and came down to his breast ‡. But since the ritual is so particular, and yet makes no mention of any collar of jewels, or any images of any form, on account of the ritual we ought to consider them as conjectures only. Nor, indeed, is there need of a further inquiry, when the jewels engraved with the names of the twelve tribes will sufficiently show the propriety and use of the ritual, in appointing this garment for the high priest.

This account of the Urim and Thummim seems greatly confirmed by the man- Civil Government Heb. 201.

* Urim autem, ut inde ordiamur, instrumentum concavum, decore fabricatum, simulachrum forte parvulum effigiem humanam referens, Theraphim antiquitus appellatum, fuisse videtur.—*Ibid.* 341.

† Ειχη δε και αγαλμα περι τον αυχενον εκ σαπφειρου λιθου, και καλειτω το αγαλμα Αληθεια. *Spencer*, l. iii. dissert. vii. p. 388.

‡ Præterea fiat collare, carbunculis et unionibus constans, quod ad pectus usque Aharonis semper pendebit, cum sanctuarium ingredietur sacra facturus.—*Le Clerc in locum.*

ner in which the answer was given, not by any shining of the stones or voice of an image, but by an audible voice from the Presence, or Shechinah; as *Moses heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercy-seat.* And so it is justly explained by Dr. Prideaux.

Numb. vii. 29. Prideaux Con. V. I. 155, &c.

Mitre and golden plate.

The last of the holy garments with which the high priest was invested, was a mitre, on which was a plate of pure gold, with *Holiness to the Lord* engraven on it. *And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it like the engravings of a signet, Holiness to the Lord; and thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre, upon the fore-front of the mitre shall it be.* This mitre of the high priest is generally understood to differ something, but not much, from the bonnets of the common priests. It might be, likely, made of more folds of linen, and complicated after a different manner, as is usual in the turbans of the eastern people, which are of very different forms, according to the different qualities of the persons for whom they are made.

Exod. xxviii. 36, 37.

Some have found out many mystical meanings, by allegorizing these garments, and every part of them. I am only to observe the real meaning and intention of the ritual: I shall, therefore, leave you to find out other meanings, if you have a mind to know them, in the authors themselves;

yet the reasons given in the ritual, the ritual explained by the Prophets, and an evident fitness to answer the wise designs of the ritual, will deserve your attention.

The ritual gives one reason; *And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.* And the same reason is given for the garments appointed for the sons of Aaron, or the priests in general. Exodus, xxviii. 2. 40.

These garments, made of fine linen, of cloth of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, interwoven with beautiful flowers, were certainly very ornamental and graceful. Now, it was a decency becoming the presence of Jehovah, the King and God of Israel, that they who waited upon him to minister immediately in the Presence should appear as decent as the servants of the princes and kings of the earth were used to do in their courts. It was a mark of respect to the persons on whom they waited, to be served by persons of some distinction, who should be distinguished by a decent and a graceful dress, as one part of that reverence and respect required in the Presence. It was fit these persons who were called to a nearer attendance on the Presence, should be considered by the people as honourable on account of their office, and therefore to have such robes of office as should be decent and ornamental.

It was, moreover, wise in the ritual to appoint, in particular, and with exactness, what these garments should be. It could not be safe to leave the choice of the garments, in which the priests were to minister before Jehovah, to their own imagination: it was of importance to stop at once the superstitions which would, most probably, arise from an unrestrained invention. How many were the superstitious rites of idolatrous worship in this very article? Every god had his proper vestments for his priests; in some cases, men were to worship in the dress of women, and women in the habits of men; of which superstitions we shall see something further, in a more proper place: only let us here observe a good reason, why these directions for the priests' garments were made a part of the ritual, and the observance of these laws so strictly required by it. When nothing was left by the law to private discretion, it was a necessary act of obedience due to the law to observe it carefully; it was not a bare omission of the use of a rite or ceremony, for which reason, some pretend, the law punished it with so great severity; it was moreover a disobedience to the voice of the oracle, to the authority of the presence of Jehovah among them; not only in itself a moral crime, but such an one, as in its consequences destroyed the authority of the whole law, and threat-

ened an entire subversion of the constitution of the Hebrew church and worship.

You will further observe of these garments, that the Holy Scriptures themselves refer them to a moral instruction, as emblems of that purity of heart, those virtuous dispositions of mind, which are the true beauties and real ornaments of the soul, which are as graceful to the mind as the garments of the priests were to their bodies; concerning which St. Peter observes, *they are, in the sight of God, of great price.* The spirit of prophecy in like manner explains the meaning of fine linen: *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is* (or signifies) *the righteousness of saints.* It seems an easy and natural instruction, if the priests were to be washed with water, that their bodies might be clean when they appeared in the presence of Jehovah, their hearts were also to be cleansed from such lusts as defile the soul. If the priests were to be clothed with garments ritually holy, in which there was engraven *Holiness to the Lord;* this plainly directs that the priests should also *be clothed with righteousness,* according to the Psalmist; or that their souls should be adorned with true righteousness and real holiness, when especially they were to appear in the presence of the holy, blessed God.

1 Pet. iii. 4.

Rev. xix. 8.

Psalm cxxxii. 9.

In a word, these garments, appointed for the priests by the Hebrew ritual, were proper, decent, and graceful, free from all superstition in themselves, and a wise fence against the superstitions of their neighbours, teaching useful, moral instruction, and answering all the wise designs for which the Hebrew worship was to be ritual.

Anointing.

When the priests were thus washed with water, and invested with their robes of office, they were to be anointed. Then (says the ritual) *shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.* This anointing oil was oil-olive, in which the principal spices were to be infused with which the tabernacle and vessels, as well as Aaron and his sons, were to be anointed to consecrate them, and was appropriated to this religious use. The ritual forbid the common use of it, or even the composition of any thing like it.

Exodus, xxix. 7.

xxx. 23, 24, 26—30.

32, 33.

In the solemn consecration of Aaron, Moses accordingly *took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle, and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar, and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him.* These ceremonies, performed

Levit. viii. 10, 11, 12.

by the command, and in the name of Jehovah, naturally expressed a consecration, by God's authority, to sanctify them for God's service; it taught the proper authority, and gave encouragement to hope the qualifications suitable for the discharge of the office to which they were sanctified. So just is the observation of a judicious author, that the holy anointings had the signification of honour and joy, of holiness and inspiration of the Holy Ghost *. The Psalmist speaks of the oil of gladness, *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Therefore, in allusion to the composition of this holy oil, *all thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia,* the principal spices used in it. And thus the Son of God is represented as the Messiah and Christ, both which mean God's anointed, and is explained, *that God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;* and again, *that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power.* Here we have again a plain rite of known use and meaning, to show the authority of the persons officiating, and encouragement to hope the qualifications necessary for the discharge of their office,

Psalm xlv. 7.

8.

John, iii. 34.

Acts, x. 38.

* Habuit autem unguentum sacrum, ut honoris et gaudii significationem, ita sanctitatis et afflatûs divini. —*Outram de Sacrificiis*, l. i. c. 5. § 3.

through the blessing of God, who thus called them, by anointing, to their office. Here we have a rite free from all superstition, as well as of useful meaning, well fitted to keep out every superstition, which had found out many compositions, and in particular ointments of wonderful magical powers and virtues, as the principles of idolatry, imposing on the credulity of the vulgar, persuaded them to believe; and a rite which prepared the mind to receive the Messiah, as in the fullest meaning the Lord's anointed.

Consecration of the priests by sacrifices.

The last ceremony of consecration which the ritual directs, is a threefold sacrifice, a bullock, and two rams: the bullock was a sin-offering; one of the rams for a burnt-offering; the other, called the ram of consecration, was a peace-offering; and therefore Moses directed Aaron and his sons *to eat it, with the bread that was in the basket of consecration.*

Levit. viii. 31.

Leviticus, xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

The ritual directs, in the first place, *And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock; and thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. And thou shalt*

take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar; but the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp; it is a sin-offering. This sin-offering was an atonement for Aaron and his sons, who were then to be consecrated priests to Jehovah. They were first to be purged from their sins by a sin-offering, that they might be fit to appear in the presence of the holy, blessed God, or, as Dr. Outram speaks, in the words of Rabbi Levi Ben Gerson, "You are to observe the reason "of the order in which these sacrifices "are appointed to be offered: the first "sacrifice is a sin-offering for the expiation "of their sins, of which only a little of "the fat was offered unto God (to whom "be praise), because they who were to of-"fer (the priests) were not as yet worthy, "from whom God should receive gifts "and offerings *."

Aaron and his sons are directed to put their hands on the head of this bullock. This ceremony was attended, in the sin-

* Observari debet ratio ordinis quo facta erant hæc sacrificia; nam primum omnium, in peccatorum expiationem, factum erat sacrificium piaculare, cujus nihil nisi aliquanta adeps, Deo (cui laus) offerebatur, quia offerentes nondum digni erant, à quibus Deus munus et donum acciperet.—*Outram de Sacrif.* l. i. c. 5. § 5.

offering for the children of Israel, with an express confession of sins; it was directed that *Aaron should lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over them all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgression in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat.* The Hebrew masters represent the form of this confession after such manner as this: I have sinned; I have committed iniquity; I have trespassed, and done thus and thus, and do return with repentance before thee; and with this I make atonement. Mr. Le Clerc observes, the rite itself would signify a confession of sins, though not expressed in words *.

Levit. xvi. 21.

Ainsworth on Exodus, xxix. 10.

The next sacrifice directed by the ritual was an whole burnt-offering: *Thou shalt also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar; it is a burnt-offering unto the Lord, it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord.*

Exodus, xxix. 15, 16—18.

Concerning this sacrifice as a burnt-offering, an offering of sweet savour, you may observe, it was offered to God as from persons restored to his peace, and

* Hoc saltem constare videtur, hunc ipsum ritum, confessionem peccati, tacente licet sacerdote, fuisse.—*Le Clerc in loc.*

received into his favour, as a sweet savour of rest and peace; or, according to R. Levi Ben Gerson, "after they were now purified, that it might appear they were devoted to the holy ministry, they sacrificed an whole burnt-offering, which was all given unto God (to whom be praise) on his altar *."

The last sacrifice was most properly called the sacrifice of consecration: the ritual directed, *And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him; and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.* This sacrifice was used in part, you see, as an offering to God, and therefore the blood is sprinkled on his altar, and in

Exodus, xxix. 19, 20. 21.

* Postquam jam lustrati essent, quo eos sacro ministerio devotos esse intelligeretur, holocaustum, quod totum in ara, datum est Deo (cui laus), immolebatur.—*Outram de Sacrif.* l. i. c. 5. § 5.

part as a consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priest's office, and therefore the blood of it was sprinkled on them and on their garments.

The ritual yet further directs concerning this ram of consecration, that, besides what was offered on the altar, a portion was to be reserved for Aaron and his sons, as of the sacrifices of peace-offerings. This was to be dressed in the holy place; and then the ritual adds, *And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.* This sacrifice is to be ended with a feast upon part of it, of which no stranger was to eat, only Aaron and his sons, as now received into God's family by their consecration; or, "after the whole burnt-"offering they offered a peace-offering (in "which a part was given to God, a part "to the priests, and a part to the offerers) "for this end, that it might appear they "were admitted to the same table, they "now being accepted of God, and re-"ceived into his favour *."

Exodus, xxix. 26. 28. 31. 32.

* Salutare denique ut sacrum epulum, quo Dei familiæ initiarentur. *Or, as he uses the words of* R. Levi Ben Gerson, Post holocaustum autem sacrificium, simile salutari (cujus pars Deo, pars sacerdotibus, pars offerentibus dari, solet), cum in finem offerebant, ut eos jam in gratiam apud Deum, eosque acceptos esse constaret, ut communi cum iis mensa uterentur.—*Outram de Sacrif.* l. i. c. 5. § 5.

Every one so easily perceives the instruction intended by touching the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, that it will be sufficient to mention, that it admonished the priests, now consecrated to God and his service, to hear the word of God with attention, to be ready to do the will of God to the utmost of their power, and to walk in the ways of God's commandments in their whole conversation. Every one may easily understand the meaning of such rites of consecration as these, and with a moderate attention may discover the other wise designs of their institution; which will be considered more particularly in the Third Part.

Consecration of the Levites. Numb. viii. 19.

The Levites also, though not priests, yet had their consecration; as, *They were given to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation.* This reason is explained: *For all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine,* said Jehovah to Moses: *in the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for myself. And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel.* When the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed, the first-born of Israel were saved. They owed the service of their lives to Jehovah that saved them; 17, 18.

but in lieu of that service, and to keep the memory of it, with the reason why that service was due, the Levites were sanctified to God in their room.

They were, therefore, to be initiated into their office, as well as the priests, the sons of Aaron. In the first place, they are
Numb. viii. 6. directed to be cleansed: *Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.* This cleansing was *to sprinkle water of purifying upon them: and*
7. *let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so let them be clean.*
8. They were then *to offer one young bullock, with its meat-offering, even fine flower mingled with oil, and another young bullock for a sin-offering:* or, as it is afterwards expressed, these were to be offered,
12. *the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites.* When these sacrifices were ready, the ritual di-
9. rects that the *Levites should be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation, and the whole assembly of the children of Israel together.* Then follows the significant and solemn rite of their dedication:
10, 11. *And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites, and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord.*

The uses for which the Levites were offered to Jehovah were many, and of great importance. It was of consequence to represent it so to themselves and to the children of Israel. The honour of the Presence, and the service of the tabernacle, the study of the law, and instruction of the people in it, required many hands and all their time. The ritual very properly and wisely directs, that this should be a solemn act of the people in full assembly, as well as of Aaron as priest. The children of Israel, by putting their hands upon the Levites, recognise the right of Jehovah to the service of the first-born as their God and King, that whatever service the Levites were appointed to perform, might have been required of them as a personal service. This amounted to a personal consent and ratification of their appointment to their services in their room, and a tacit promise and agreement they would own them as such.

The other rites are so evidently instructive of the reverence and holiness of all who approach the presence of the holy God, in his holy place, that there is hardly need to mention it; to be sure, there is need of no more than just to mention it.

CHAP. IV.

Ritual of the Worship before the Presence.

You have seen how the ritual directed the priests and Levites to minister before Jehovah. The next thing observable in the ritual is the worship it directs, or how they were to minister before the Presence, and wherein their service did consist. Now, as Aaron and his sons were sanctified to minister to Jehovah in the priest's office, so we have a very just account of the priest's office by the Apostle to the Hebrews: *For every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining unto God, that he may both offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.* Offerings and sacrifices were in fact the principal parts of the priest's office, of the public and national worship, both occasional and stated. It will be necessary, then, to examine carefully the nature of this worship, in order to understand the wise designs of it, from its true intention and meaning.

Exodus, xxiv. 44.

Heb. v. 1.

Sacrifices of all sorts, and offerings of every kind, were outward actions expressing some inward sentiment or affection of men's minds with respect to God: some had a regard to God as the Creator, Preserver, supreme Governor and Lord of all, whom all were to acknowledge, and to ho-

nour as such. Such were the burnt-offerings, especially as distinguished from the peace-offerings and the sin-offerings. The peace-offerings were offered unto God, as the Giver of all the blessings of life, whether blessings already received, in which they were to be sensible of the goodness of God, and to acknowledge it by some acts of respect and honour, or whether they were blessings they desired from God as of his goodness and favour, which they were to ask therefore of him, and to hope for from him, as the Lord of all, and Author of every blessing of providence. In the one of these sacrifices they gave thanks unto God for present mercies, in the other they offered up their prayers unto God for future blessings, and mercies yet to come; finally, the sacrifices called sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, were offered unto God, as the righteous Governor and Judge of the world, offended with all iniquity, with every transgression of the laws of righteousness, and with every sin, and as the righteous Governor and Judge of the world, who will visit iniquity, transgression, and sin, so as not to let the sinner go unpunished; but who will also *show mercy, and abundantly pardon, when the wicked shall forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord,* according to the Prophet. Outram de Sacrif. l. 1. l. x. s. 2. Isaiah, lv.

Hence the several sacrifices of the law

appear to answer with exactness the several parts of prayer. They express in a significant rite, what prayers express in words, an humble confession of sin, thankful acknowledgments of mercy and goodness, dependence on God, and hope in him for all future blessings, or an honourable acknowledgment of God, as the Creator, Benefactor, supreme Lord, Governor, and Judge of the whole world.

As such, then, the gifts, offerings, and sacrifices of the Hebrew ritual are indeed expressive of the most natural, proper, and useful acts of true religious worship, an acknowledgment of the several characters and relations of God as the object of worship, and express the sentiments and affections of an understanding and devout worshipper *.

But more fully to discern the meaning, wisdom, and usefulness of these rites, it will be proper to consider some things relating to them more distinctly.

This general account of sacrifices will teach us to reduce them conveniently to three heads—whole burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, and offerings for sins.

Whole burnt-offerings.

The whole burnt-offerings seem to have been, as the most ancient, so of the most

* Porphyry gives the same general notion of worship by sacrifices, either to the honour of God, or to give him thanks, or to ask of him some good we want or desire, as Grotius observes on Levit. i. 9.

general use, and to answer all the intentions of sacrifices. Peace-offerings, and offerings for sin, as distinguished from whole burnt-offerings, were rather peculiar constitutions of the Mosaical ritual, than of patriarchal use. In ancient times, according to the learned Dr. Outram *, when no other sacrifices were in use but whole burnt-offerings, this one kind of sacrifice was applicable, according to each person's intention, to every part of natural worship, and was petition, thanksgiving, and propitiation. This may appear in the use of them. Thus Noah offered burnt-offerings as a thanksgiving to God for his preservation from the flood; and the Lord said, *Neither will I again smite any more every thing living as I have done.* Gen. viii. 20, 21. Job offered burnt-offerings as propitiatory, or offerings for sin; for Job said, *It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.* Job, i. 5. Balaam made use of a burnt-offering as a peace-offering, to ask the blessing of God for Balak and the princes of Moab, and to obtain leave to curse the children of Israel, as their enemies. Num. xxiii. 14, &c. The Hebrew ritual wisely preserved this most ancient rite of sacrifice, and confirmed in particular the

* Enimvero in primordiis mundi, cum nulla essent sacrificia nisi holocausta fieri solita, hoc idem sacrificii genus et ειδικον erat, et ευχαριστικον, et cuivis, ut cuique visum esset, cultus naturalis generi, adhibitum.—*Outram*, l. 1. c. x. s. 3.

distinguishing rite, that all should be burnt upon the altar: *And the priests shall bring in all, and burn it upon the altar; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.*

Levit. i. 13.

Peace-offerings.

Besides the ancient burnt-offerings, the Hebrew ritual appointed other offerings, which were called peace-offerings. These were designed either as petitions to God, the Author of every blessing to every creature, that he would be pleased, of his favour, to grant them the blessings they desired for themselves, and which they hoped to receive from him, as his gift and through his favour, or as expressing their gratitude and thankfulness to God for their present blessings, in acknowledgment they were owing to God's favour. Their name shows their meaning, שלמים signifying peace or prosperity. They are accordingly rendered by the LXX θυσιας σωτηριου, sacrifices of salvation. Some peace-offerings therefore, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, "were "offered in way of devotion, as free-will "offerings, to continue or to compass "peace with God; some in way of thanks-"giving, and these were for prosperity, or "good obtained already; and some by way "of vows, and these were offered, that "prosperity or good might be obtained "for the future; for this division of peace-"offerings into thanks-offerings, free-will "offerings, and offerings for vows, is held "out by the law." Levit. vii.

Light-foot, Temple Service, l. viii. § 4.

The Hebrew ritual appointed also particular sacrifices for sin: these were called by different names, חטאה and אשם, which our translators render sin-offering and trespass-offering. The ritual of the sin-offering directs, *If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them, if the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for the sin he hath sinned, a young bullock, without blemish, unto the Lord for a sin-offering.*

Sacrifices for sin.

Levit. iv. 2, 3.

There was a difference between trespass-offerings and sin-offerings, though in many things very much alike. "Trespass-offerings," says Dr. Lightfoot, "were of "two kinds—a doubtful trespass-offering, "and a trespass-offering undoubted. The "doubtful trespass-offering was when a "man had some reason to doubt, whether "he had transgressed the law or not; as if "one had eat fat at table, but was not "certain whether it was such fat as it was "lawful to eat, or unlawful by the ritual; "for they might eat the fat of beef or "mutton, but not the fat of the inwards; "if he eateth one of these fats, he know-"eth not whether—for this probability, "that he may be under guilt, he is to "bring a trespass-offering suspensive."

אשם תלוי
אשם ודאי

Lightfoot, Temple Service, l. viii. § 3.

The certain trespass-offering was for

Levit. vi. 2. Levit. v. 16. Levit. xix. 20. Numb. vi. 12. Levit. xiv. 10. trespasses which were certainly determined and known, as for a thing stolen or detained, for sacrilege; the trespass-offering concerning a bond-maid, the trespass-offering of the Nazarites, and finally, the trespass-offering of the leper. Some of these trespasses were a known uncleanness, others for such trespasses as could hardly be unknown to the persons themselves who were guilty of them; for instance, in the trespass of a thing stolen, or denying a trust, *If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto a neighbour, in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship in a thing taken away by violence, or have deceived his neighbour, or hath found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely, in any of all these that a man doth sinning therein.* Levit. vi. 2. These were sins for which men could not well plead an excuse of ignorance, inadvertency, or doubt: the circumstance in this trespass, for which, in this case, an offering was allowed to be offered to make an *atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him,* seems to be this, that it was fit to give encouragement to a voluntary confession of such trespasses as could not be otherwise proved upon the offender, for the sake of justice to the injured, by restitution with a further compensation, and to bring the offender to a sense and confession of his own guilt, profitable

to himself and a useful example to others. The sins, then, and trespasses for which sacrifices were allowed and appointed by the ritual, were either such as were committed through ignorance, or which others would have been in ignorance of, if they had not been discovered and made known by the free and voluntary confession of the offender himself. Outram de Sacrificiis, l. 1. c. xiii. § 5.

As the ritual directed these several kinds of sacrifices, which give so much light to their design and use, and the wisdom of both; it also very wisely prescribed what things should be offered, as gifts and sacrifices. These were to be in part living creatures of beasts or cattle, or birds, and in part of the fruits of the earth, corn, wine, oil, frankincense. What to be offered as sacrifices.

The ritual directed the use of five sorts of living creatures, three of cattle and two of birds. *If any man of you* (says the ritual) *bring an offering unto the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock.* If of the herd, it was of the ox kind; if of the flock, it was of the sheep or of the goats; if of birds, it was either turtle-doves, or young pigeons: the turtle-doves were to be grown, the pigeons to be young, without any regard to sex; but sacrifices of the herd or flock had regard to sex as well as age. Live creatures. Levit. i. 2.

You see, then, the ritual, by fixing what

animals should be offered, prevented every thing a superstitious fancy might introduce in the choice of them, as it had done among their heathen neighbours. It directed such as were clean, allowed for food of most common use, tame, domestic, and most easy to be procured: thus, though other creatures, as the hart, the roe-buck, and the fallow deer, were allowed for food, yet only the ox or bullock, the sheep and the goat, were allowed for sacrifice.

Deuter. xiv. 5.

As sacrifices were confined to these kinds, so what was to be chosen out of these kinds was to be perfect, without any blemish or defect. *Whatever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you.* How easy is the reason—that what is offered unto God's acceptance, should not be unworthy of it, by any blemish or defect!

Levit. xxii. 20.

Offerings of the fruits of the earth.

Besides the sacrifices of living creatures, the ritual directed offerings of flour, oil, and wine, the fruits of the earth, a proper tribute to God, who gave them their land and all its increase: these were called meat-offerings and drink-offerings, for which there is this general direction: *My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices, made by fire for a sweet savour unto me, in their due season.* This was *the tenth part of an ephah* of flour for a meat-of-*

Numb. xxviii. 2.

5.

* An ephah was a measure among the Hebrews near

fering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the drink-offering 5.
thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for one lamb; or there was appointed the same quantity for each lamb. *In the holy* 7.
place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.

The meat-offerings were of several sorts, Levit. ii.
of which the ritual gives a very particular 2. 3.
account; some of flour, oil, and frankincense, without being any ways dressed: the 4.
memorial of this was to be burnt upon the altar, but the remnant to be Aaron's and his sons'. Some were to be baked in the 5.
oven, called unleavened cakes or wafers; 7.
some were baked in a pan or a flat plate, some in a frying-pan, or raised on the sides: the memorial of these was also to be brought to the altar; the remnant was for Aaron and his sons.

It is further ordered, *No meat-offering* 8. 9. 10.
which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven, for ye shall burn no lea- 11.
ven nor any honey in any offering of the Lord made by fire; but it is expressly required, *every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt, neither shalt*

an English bushel: a tenth part will be about three English quarts. An hin was a measure somewhat more than six English quarts: a quarter of an hin will be about three pints; from whence the other proportions are easily determined. It may be observed here, that a log, another Hebrew measure mentioned in these directions, was the twelfth part of an hin, very near an English pint.

thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy
13. *God to be lacking from thy meat-offering.*

The Israelites owed the fruitfulness of their land, the increase of their corn, and wine, and oil, to the continual blessing and care of God's providence. It was fit they should acknowledge such goodness of God, and these offerings were very significant expressions of it; or, in the words of Bishop Patrick on the place, "They were offered "as a grateful acknowledgment unto God, "that they held all they possessed of him, "as their sovereign Lord, whom they sup-"plicated also hereby, that he would be still "mindful of them, that is, be gracious to "them." As these sacrifices were to be also feasts, in some of which the priests, in others the offerers had their part, it was proper they should be attended with meat and drink offerings. Being thus entertained at God's table, they had a declaration of peace and friendship between God and them: hence Bishop Patrick observes, the salt of all sacrifices was called the salt of the covenant, to signify, as men were used to eat and drink together, in making covenants, and as salt was always used at table, so God, by these offerings, and a feast upon them, did testify his covenant with those who were invited to partake of it. Leaven and honey were ferments, and considered as having contrary qualities to salt; or, as salt tended to the preservation, so leaven and honey

tended to the alteration and corruption of what they were mixed with; so that they were used as emblems of malice, hypocrisy, and moral corruption. It is further observed, that honey had been abused to superstition; the Egyptians had a composition called kuphi, which they offered constantly every day, morning and evening, on their altars, in which honey, with figs and sweet fruits, with myrrh and cardamoms, and fragrant spices, were mixed together, as an acceptable oblation to the gods, as Bishop Patrick has observed from many testimonies of the best authority. The meat and drink offerings then were proper offerings, *an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord: a thing most holy, of the offerings of the Lord made by fire.* This ritual of the Hebrews, directing what was to be offered in sacrifice to Jehovah, directed chiefly meat, bread, and wine, such things as were of most common use, without any magical rites, or superstitious compositions of things, as more acceptable to the gods, and more likely to make them propitious; they were such things only, as were a natural and decent expression of thankfulness to God for former mercies, and hope in God for mercies yet to come, or pledges of God's covenant mercies to a chosen and favoured people.

Κυφ.

Bishop Patrick on the place.

Levit. ii. 9.

10.

That all things in this worship might be done to answer the intention of the ritual itself, to stop every passage of superstition,

Ritual of the sacrificial actions.

the law wisely took care to give particular direction for each sacrificial action, both with respect to the offerers, and with respect to the priests. We have a sufficient delineation of these rites in Levit. i.

It is directed, with respect to the offerer, *He shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him; and he shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about the altar, that is, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood, that is, on the fire which is upon the altar; but his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water, and the priest shall burn all on the altar.*

Levit. i. 3 to 10.

From hence the Hebrew masters observe there were five things relating to the offerings which were to be done by the offerers themselves, and five others which were to be done by the priests only. They generally suppose the offerer was to lay on his hands, that he might kill the bullock,

flay it, cut it in its pieces, and wash the inwards with water; but the other five, receiving the blood of the sacrifice, sprinkling the blood, setting in order the wood for the fire of the altar, and laying the parts of the sacrifice on the altar, were proper acts of the priesthood. Reland Antiq. Part iii. c. 1. § 14.

In offerings of fowls the rites were somewhat different. *If the offering be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves or of young pigeons; and the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar, and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar.* In this offering the blood was to be sprinkled on the altar, in the act of killing it; the priest is therefore directed to kill it himself at the very altar. There are some other particular differences in the rites of different sacrifices, the principal of which may be easily seen in the ritual itself. Levit. i. 14, 15.

Oblation of the sacrifice.

The ritual first directs, when a sacrifice is rightly chosen, the offerer is to bring it voluntarily to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and so before the presence of Jehovah, or before the Shechinah, which was the kebla of the Hebrew worship. This was necessary to prevent the custom of offering sacrifices at any place they should choose, and therefore by any persons, and with any rites they should think fit; which would expose them to the danger of using some idolatrous ceremo-

Levit. xvii. 2, 3, 4.

nies; therefore it is so severely forbid. *This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, saying, What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering to the Lord, before the tabernacle of the Lord, blood shall be imputed to that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people.* "Which severe penalty," says Bishop Patrick, "was enacted to preserve the Israel-"ites from idolatry; for, if they had been "permitted to offer sacrifices where they "pleased, they might easily have forsaken "God, by altering the rites which he had "ordained, nay, by offering to strange gods, "particularly to the dæmons, which we "render devils, *Levit.* xvii. 7." This was a proper oblation by the offerer, an oblation of the sacrifice now alive, by the offerer himself, as his own voluntary act, as there was another oblation of the sacrifice slain by the priest, when he offered the blood of the sacrifice upon the altar.

Outram, l. i. c. 15. § 4.

Imposition of hands. Levit. i. 4.

The person who thus brought his offering before the presence of Jehovah, was to put his hand upon the head of it: *And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him.* It is not material to inquire whether the offerer put

on both his hands, and, as some of the masters teach, with all their might; it will be sufficient to understand in general the meaning of this rite. Imposition of hands, says the forementioned great author; "was "a rite of marking or pointing out such "things as were either sentenced to death, "or recommended to the grace of God, or "appointed to some office, or some sacred "use." When a person was guilty of blaspheming the name of the Lord, and cursing, the witnesses against him were to lay their hands upon his head, by which they solemnly attested his guilt. *Let all that heard him, lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.* It was also in use as a rite of blessing; as in the example of Jacob, when he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh: *He stretched out his right hand, laying it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly, for Manasseh was the first born.* Here the use of putting the hand on the head of the person to be blessed, and the preference of the right hand in the use of this ceremony, are plainly represented, as of well-known, as well as of very ancient use. And when Moses was directed to invest Joshua with the office of Judge, *and put some of his honour upon him, that all the children of Israel might be obedient; he took Joshua, and set him*

Outram, l. i. c. 15. § 8.

Levit. xxiv. 14.

Genesis, xlviii. 14.

Num. xxvii. 22, 23.

before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hands of Moses.

Imposition of hands was accompanied, in most cases, with confessions, praises, or prayers, suitable to the nature and design of the sacrifice. The same learned author has observed, from Maimonides, and other Hebrew masters, several of the forms, in which the offerer, who put on his hands, confessed his sins over a sin-offering, and his trespasses over a trespass-offering, or celebrated the praises of God in peace-offerings. I shall only show the wise and useful design of this rite, in an instance prescribed by the ritual itself. In offering the first-fruits, they were to be brought before the Presence, *unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, to place his name there.* When they present this offering to the priest, they are to say unto him, *I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt speak and say before thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil en-*

Outram, l. c. 15. § 8.

Deut. xxvi. 2.

treated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried to the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: And the Lord brought us up out of Egypt, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey: And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me; and thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God. Deut. xxvi. 3 to 11.

How suitable is this profession to the offerings of the first-fruits! Here is an acknowledgment of the goodness of God; of their own unworthiness to receive so great goodness; of the truth of God's promises, and God's faithfulness, in fulfilling his covenant. What useful instruction, what proper praise, do these few words express; *Now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me!*

By the next law, on paying the second tithe, a portion for the widow, the fatherless, and stranger, with the Levite, they were to profess, *I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house; and also have given them unto the Levite and unto* 12.

the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither
13, 14. *have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away aught thereof for any unclean use, nor given aught thereof for the dead; but have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.* This profession, directed by the ritual, was a wise provision, to keep in memory the goodness of God to the Hebrew nation, and their peculiar engagements to the honour and service of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, as the Abrahamic family: it was a wise means, by an offering to Jehovah, attended with such a profession, to prevent the superstitions then gaining ground. As the Egyptians, says Bishop Patrick, "when "they offered the first-fruits of the earth, "kept the feast of Isis with doleful lament-"ations; and as the Egyptians by this "mourning acknowledged Isis, that is, the "earth, to be the giver of all these good "things; so Jehovah required his people "to bring in their harvest with the great-"est joy and thanks to him. As the ido-"laters separated some part of the first-"fruits for magical purposes, and some-"times for carnal and filthy" (as in their feasts, great impurities were allowed and

Bishop Patrick on the place.

practised—" and as they were used to ho-
" nour the gods and heroes of their coun-
" try publicly, according to the laws of
" their country, and privately, as much as
" they were able, with speaking well of
" them, and with the first fruits and an-
" nual offerings;" the ritual wisely di- Spencer, l. ii. c. 24.
rects, not only an offering to Jehovah, the one true God, and a profession that they have not abused the fruits of the earth to any magical or unclean use, or to the honour or worship of any departed souls as became heroes since their death; it was a constant useful exhortation to receive all their blessings as the gift of Jehovah, and to honour him, and him only, as their God.

There is another confession directed by the ritual, which may help to explain the intention and the use of it; it is the confession the high priest was directed to make, when he had laid both his hands upon the head of the live goat. *And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.* If a private person had sinned, he was to make a particular confession of that sin. *And it shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath* Levit. xvi. 21. Levit. v. 5.

sinned in that thing. This is well expressed in the confession mentioned by Maimon, as the common form in use: "I beseech thee, "O Lord, I have sinned; I have trespassed; "I have been rebellious; I have done this, "or this (naming the particular sin in "which he had sinned); but now I repent; "and may this offering be my expiation!" The meaning of which, according to Dr. Outram, from the Hebrew masters, was this: "Let this sacrifice be substituted in "my stead, that the evil which I have de-"served may fall on the head of this my "sacrifice." I only add, the prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, often mentions confession of sin, as well as petitions and prayers, thanksgivings and praise. This part of the ritual, then, usefully explained the general meaning of sacrifices, and the particular intention and use of each of them, in their several kinds. It usefully exhorted a suitable temper of mind and affections, proper to each offering. We hence learn with what propriety a broken and contrite spirit are called sacrifices of God by David; how justly the Psalmist resolves to offer unto the Lord the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and compares the prayers of good men with the offerings and sacrifices of the temple; *Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.* How well did this ritual prefigure the Lamb of

Outram, l. i. c. 5. § 10.

2 Chron. vi.

Psalm li.

Psalm cxvi. 17.

Psalm cxli. 2.

God, who was appointed to take away the sins of the world; or, as the Prophet describes it, in allusion to this rite, *The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah, liii. 5.

The next thing the ritual directed, was killing the sacrifice: this is accounted by the Hebrew writers, what the offerer might do himself; which is agreeable to the expression of the law: but as they had a great care in killing a sacrifice that the blood might run immediately and quickly out of the wound, that no blood might stagnate, and remain behind, which would have been a breach of the laws against eating of blood, at least have given suspicion of eating blood, killing the sacrifice required some art and skill, hardly to be learned well, but by much practice; it was therefore usually left to the priests, who were to be supposed best skilled in it. Killing the sacrifice.

It deserves observation, that the ritual directs the very place where the sacrifice was to be killed: *And he shall kill it on the side of the altar, northward, before the Lord.* This is meant of the burnt-offerings, which the law is there speaking of, and of sin and trespass offerings, which the law directs shall be offered in the same place. Other sacrifices, such as peace-offerings, for particular persons, the paschal lamb, and the like, were most usually killed, as Bishop Patrick observes, on the south side of the altar. The service of the Levit. i. 11. Levit. vi. 25. Levit. vii. 2.

temple was thus performed with less confusion, and more order: and thus the ritual wisely prevented any of the customs of idolatry being introduced into the very house and temple of Jehovah, by slaying the beast, with its head to a certain point of the heavens, in particular eastward, as the east was the kebla of the heathen, and as standing with their faces towards the east to worship, was a known rite of idolatry.

Patrick on Levit. i. 11. Ezek. viii. 16.

Receiving the blood, and putting it on the altar.

The next ceremony appointed by the ritual, when the sacrifice was slain, was a proper act of Aaron and his sons, as priests: *And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.* This was the manner of offering the blood in burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, and the like: the ceremony differed somewhat in sin-offerings, and offerings of that sort: *And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering.*

Levit. i. 5.

As some sacrifices were to be brought into the most holy place, and to be offered immediately before the Presence, the ritual gives particular directions concerning them: *The priest shall dip his finger in the blood* (of the sin-offering for himself), *and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the*

Levit. iv. 6.

Lord, before the vail of the sanctuary. The like rite was to be observed in a sin-offering, for the whole congregation. In the day of atonement the ritual gives a yet further direction: he was to *take a censer full of burning coals, with his hand full of sweet incense, beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire, before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat, eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall be sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.* 17. Levit. xvi. 12. 13. 14.

The sacrifices whose blood was brought into the holy and most holy place, and sprinkled before the vail, or on the mercy-seat, were such sacrifices as were offered on the more solemn and public occasions, and seemed therefore naturally to require some particular and more solemn rites in the offering of them. These were proper to fix the attention of the congregation on those more solemn occasions, to the design and intention of those more solemn sacrifices, to direct a suitable temper of mind, a just and wise reason, for a more exact ritual, on such greater and more extraordinary occasions.

The blood being thus offered, the sacrifice was flayed; concerning which there is

but one general direction in the ritual: And *he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces.* But, with respect to dividing the sacrifice, and cutting it into his pieces, there are two directions: *The priests, Aaron's sons,* were to *lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: but the inwards and the legs shall he wash in water; and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.*

Flaying and burning the sacrifice. Levit. i. 6. 8, 9.

This was the ritual for whole burnt-offerings: it was directed concerning the sin and trespass offerings, *And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul that is above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall be taken away: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, for an offering made by fire, unto the Lord: it is a trespass-offering.* The rest was to be eaten by the priests in the holy place.

Levit. vii. 3, 4, 5. 6.

Some of the sacrifices were directed to be carried without the camp (or which afterwards answered to the camp, the holy city), and to be burnt there, so that nothing might remain of it, or be eaten. These are directions for the sin-offering for the priest, and the sin-offering for the

Burning without the camp. Levit. iv. 11, 12.

whole congregation. There is a further general rule, that *no sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire.* These sacrifices, as Dr. Outram * observes, were the chief of all expiatory sacrifices; and as such they were represented by the ritual, as polluted, having sin laid upon them, so as to convey a symbolical pollution to others. Levit. iv. 20, 21. Levit. vi. 30.

But many sacrifices were appointed to be eaten, together with the meat and drink offerings attending them, by the priests only, and in the most holy place, or, as it is elsewhere called, the holy place, and the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, Levit. vi. 16. Some were given to the priests, to their sons and daughters with them, which their families might eat in the holy city, or any part of Jerusalem, in respect of which the courts of the temple were more holy, and the court of the priests most holy, which was the place appointed for the priests, who alone were to do the service of the sanctuary. Other sacrifices were to be eaten by the offerers themselves and their families; the ritual therefore directs, *And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings and your sacri-* Eating the sacrifices, or feasts upon them.

* Atque hæ victimæ, ut maxima omnium piacula erant, ita hos à quibus cremabantur, labe symbolica maculabant.—*Outram*, l. i. c. xvii. § 2.

fices, and your tithes, and heave-offerings of your hand; and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks. And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God; and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee. They who ate of the sacrifices, were considered as partakers of the sacrifices. This was esteemed an evidence and testimony of friendship, and is a probable reason why the ritual did not allow persons to eat of their own sin-offerings, being then considered as guilty before God; but being restored to favour by his sin-offering, he had a testimonial of his acceptance, by partaking of the feast on a peace-offering. And this may give a reason why there is a feast on the sacrifice of Christ in his church, though answering the most solemn piacular sacrifices under the law; for his sacrifice is to be considered like the whole burnt-offering, which included all kinds of sacrifices: it was a peace-offering, at the same time it was an offering for sin.

Deut. xii. 6, 7.

Times of worship before the Presence.

You have seen the several sacrifices directed by the Hebrew ritual of worship, that they answered the principal acts of religion and devotion; that they were an honourable acknowledgment of God's dominion and goodness; a confession of the

evil of sin and guilt; of transgressing the laws of God; of hope in God, and of recommending themselves to God's mercies, protection, blessing, and grace: thus were the principal acts of worship decent, honourable, edifying rites, fit both to prevent superstition, and to excite true devotion.

There is another circumstance in which the ritual, for like wise reasons, is very particular in appointing the times of worship, as well as the place and rites of it. The appointment of the times, as we shall hereafter more fully perceive, was of too much importance to be overlooked, when a great part of the more ancient superstitions and idolatrous rites were founded on prevailing mistakes concerning the powers of angels and of spirits superior to men, over years, months, days, and hours, and upon the influences of the stars and planets in their different appearances and aspects, conjunctions and oppositions. By help of these idolatrous maxims the sun became the lord of the world, and the moon the queen of heaven, and the stars so many regents over particular things in certain periods of time. Hence, there were lucky and unlucky days, and times almost for every action: seasons were accounted prosperous or unhappy, as one or other of these imaginary gods was supposed to rule, as the sun, moon, or particular planet, should chance in the course of their rota-

tion to govern such a month, day, or hour; in which a great part of the Egyptian and Chaldean wisdom consisted. This took from Jehovah, the one true God, the honour of his providence and government of the world, the subjection of the sun and moon, and all the hosts of heaven to do his pleasure, and fulfil his will: the ritual therefore directed the times, as well as the manner of worship, to teach that all times were in the hands of Jehovah, that He is Lord alone of all seasons and times, as well as of all persons and things.

The ritual, to show that Jehovah was to be worshipped at all times, and to be acknowledged Lord of all time, directed a daily worship: *This is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the Lord, two lambs of the first year, without spot, day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, the other lamb shalt thou offer at even.* Numb. xxviii. 3, 4. 6. *This continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord,* was to have a meat-offering and a drink-offering attend it. The meat-offering was to be *a tenth part of an ephah of flour, mingled with a fourth part of an hin of beaten oil. And the drink-offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin,* 5. 7. *for the one lamb.*

The ritual further directs, concerning

the daily service, *And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring the pure olive-oil beaten for the light, to cause the light to burn always in the tabernacle of the congregation, without the vail which is before the testimony: Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord; it shall be a statute for ever to their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.* Yet further, there is a direction concerning the daily service at the golden altar of incense: *And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.* As I propose only to delineate the original ritual as given by Moses, I omit the regulations of the service of the priests and Levites, in the after-times of David and Solomon. It may however be proper to observe as we go along, that those new rules did not concern any part of the proper worship, or create any new rites or ceremonies to be added to the ancient ritual, but settled the orders, courses, and numbers of those who attended the service of the temple, and made the service thereby more regular and solemn, *to stand every morning to praise the Lord, and likewise at even.* Prayer and praise are naturally

Exodus, xxvii. 20, 21.

Exodus, xxx. 7, 8.

1 Chron. xxiii. 30.

parts of worship most fit to accompany sacrifices and offerings, for they were themselves figurative expressions of prayer and praise. The modern service of each day's worship at the temple, may be seen more at large, as exactly drawn up by Dr. Lightfoot; but as directed by the ritual itself, it may be sufficient to observe concerning it, that it consisted of a burnt-offering of a lamb, with its meat-offering and drink-offering every morning and every evening, in the dressing the lamps, and offering incense on the golden altar in the holy place, in praising God, and in blessing the people in the name of God. How plain and easy, how grave and solemn, and even how rational and instructive is this daily worship of the Hebrew church, as directed by the Mosaical ritual! Thus God was honoured and worshipped, and the people blessed every day: they acknowledged the loving-kindness of Jehovah in the morning, and his faithfulness in the evening; and they hoped their safety and happiness every day of their lives, in the protection and blessing of Jehovah, who dwelt among them as their God.

Light-foot, Temple Service, c. ix.

Besides the daily worship of God every morning and every evening, the ritual gives directions concerning the feasts of the Lord. *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, Even these are my feasts.*

Sabbaths.

Levit. xxiii. 2.

These were certain seasons or portions of time appointed to be observed to the honour of God, and in his service, in which they were to do no sort of servile work, to rest from the common business of life, and to mind with more attention the several duties of religion.

One of these feasts of the Lord, or holy convocations, was a weekly Sabbath. *Six days shall work be done, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.* 3. This holy rest was not only to be observed at the tabernacle, and before the Presence, but in all their dwellings throughout the whole land which God had given them to dwell in, according as he had promised their fathers.

The history of Moses mentioning the sanctification of the seventh day at the creation, and assigning a reason for the sanctification of it, from a circumstance in his history of the creation, seems to intimate, that the sanctification of a weekly Sabbath was coeval with the creation, and of more ancient original than the deliverance of the children of Israel out of the house of bondage, or the Mosaical law, given on Mount Sinai: and this meaning of the words in the history of Moses seems rather confirmed by reciting both these reasons in his law. Thus, *Remember the*

Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger which is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; where-

Exodus, xx. 8 to 12.

fore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it. You see how carefully this reason for sanctifying the Sabbath is preserved, though another reason is also added to it, which is that given by Moses in the repetition of the law: *And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore the*

Deut. v. 15.

Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day. Some learned men have thought there were some additions in the Mosaical law, to the ritual rest of the Sabbath, and that the day of the week on which it was observed was very likely altered: the rest required by the ritual was so strict, that it commands, *Ye shall kindle*

Exodus, xxxv. 3.

no fire throughout your generations upon the Sabbath day. The penalty of transgressing this ritual was so very great, that it is ap-

2.

pointed, *Whosoever doth work therein shall be put to death.*

Our learned Mr. Mede makes this the reason, "why the Hebrews use the six days "of the week in which they laboured, rather "than any other six days, and chose that "seventh day, namely Saturday, to hallow "and rest in, rather than any other, that "they might profess themselves servants "of Jehovah their God by a relation and "respect peculiar to themselves, to wit, "that they were the servants of that God "who redeemed Israel out of the land of "Egypt, and out of the house of bondage; "and upon the morning-watch of that "very day which they kept for their sab-"bath, he overwhelmed Pharaoh and all "his host in the Red Sea, and saved Israel "that day, out of the hands of the Egyp-"tians."—He further adds, "Certain I am "the Jews kept not that day for a sabbath, "till the raining of manna;" for which he gives this reason, They marched a weari-some march, and therefore could not rest on that day the week before, which would have been regularly their sabbath, if they had begun a new reckoning of days from the coming down of the manna. We must know, the same learned author ob-serves, "that the sabbath includes two "respects of time; first, the quotum, one "day of seven, or the seventh day after "six days' labour; secondly, the designa-"tion, or pitching that seventh day upon "that day we call Saturday: in both, the

Mede on the Ob-servation of the Sabbath and Lord's Day, p.m. 239.

" sabbatical observation was a sign and " profession that Jehovah, and no other, " was the God of Israel; the first, accord- " ing to his attribute as Creator; the se- " cond, of deliverer of Israel out of " Egypt." Hence the double reason, the one for the quotum, one day in seven, the other for the designation of the day, or which day of the seven should be appointed the sabbath. This is very agreeable to the reason given in the Prophet, *Hallow my sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.* How the Hebrews were to employ their sabbath, or use this day of rest as holy to God, we are acquainted by an eminent Hebrew author: " He, to wit, Moses, in his law, appointed " one holy day after seven, in which they " were to rest from all work and business " of the common affairs of life, that they " might give themselves up wholly to the " study of philosophy, for the improve- " ment of their virtue, and instruction of " their conscience *."

Ib. 237, 238.

Ezekiel, xx. 20.

The ritual appointed the sabbath a time of worship as well as a day of rest; it had therefore a peculiar service, over and above the morning and evening sacri-

* Δι εξ ἡμερων κελευσας αξειν ἱεραν ἑβδομην απο των αλλων ανεχονλας εργων και ζήλησιν βιω και πορισμον ινα μονων σχολαζονλας φιλοσοφειν εις βελτιωσιν ηθων και του τε συνειδο τος ελεγχον.— *Philo de Mundi Opificio*, p. 22.

fices. *And on the sabbath-day, two lambs of the first year, without spot, and two tenth deals of flour, for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof: this is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering and the drink-offering.* The ritual directs, for the proper sabbatical service, two lambs for a sacrifice over and above the two lambs appointed for the daily service; and the meat-offering for the service is directed to be double the meat-offering for every day. Numb. xxviii. 9, 10.

The service of the sabbath was distinguished also by offering the shew-bread, or *the twelve cakes made of fine flour, which were set in two rows, six in a row, upon the pure table before the Lord: every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.* When the new loaves or cakes were set upon the pure table, which was an altar, on which account the shew-bread is called an offering, and as the frankincense, a part of it, was burnt, it is called *an offering made by fire unto the Lord:* then the old cakes which were removed, were to be eaten by the priests in the holy place, *for it is most holy unto him, of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute.* Thus every sabbath there was (to use a modern word, but which well expresses the mean- Levit. xxiv. 6. 8. 7. 9.

ing of this rite) a communion, in which the priests were received and entertained at God's table on an offering of the Lord made by fire, a testimony of his acceptance of them, and of the offering they had caused to be set before his Presence, the Shechinah, in the name of the tribes and children of Israel.

This was the ritual service of the sabbath, a rite of plain, proper, and useful instruction and benefit, an excellent means to preserve the knowledge of the one true God, to reverence him as the Creator of all, as their Deliverer and God, to give time for their improvement in wisdom, and to excite their care to apply their hearts to religion, to real piety, virtue, and goodness, which their whole law taught as the chief part of all religion; as we shall more fully see in its proper place.

New moons. Besides the service directed for every morning and evening, and for the weekly sabbaths, the ritual directed a service in particular for every new moon, or the first day of every new month, which were lunar among the Hebrews. This monthly course of the moon pointed her to observation, as one of the greater lights in the visible heavens; when superstition and idolatry took occasion to make her the queen of heaven, and to worship her as a very powerful goddess. This idolatry was so universally spread among the neighbour nations of the Hebrews, that it became the wisdom and

care of the Mosaical ritual to prevent its spreading among the Hebrews also; therefore they are directed to such acts of worship as should be an express acknowledgment that Jehovah their God was the one and only true God, who directed the whole course of nature, and in particular the revolutions of the moon; that this pretended queen of heaven was one of his creatures, and, as all other creatures, subject to his will, and appointed in all her courses to do the pleasure of Jehovah.

The ritual therefore directs, *And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; and three tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering mingled with oil, for one bullock, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering mingled with oil, with one ram; and a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering unto one lamb, for a burnt-offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. And their drink-offering shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt-offering of every month throughout the months of the year. And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering unto the Lord shall be offered, besides the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.* Numb. xxviii. 11—16.

It is observed by Grotius, and mentioned with approbation by Bishop Patrick, that these words, *a sin-offering unto the Lord,* were designed to put them in mind, what was the proper object of worship at these new moons; that these sacrifices were offered to Jehovah, and not to the moon. "This," says the Bishop, "was observed long ago by Rabbi Bechai: "a goat was offered to extirpate the reli- "gion of those who worshipped the moon, "which makes the Scriptures say ex- "pressly, *unto the Lord.*" And Maimonides more largely: "This sin-offering is "peculiarly said to be *unto the Lord,* lest "any one should think this goat to be a "sacrifice unto the moon, after the man- "ner of the Egyptians, which was not "necessary to be said of the goats offered "at other solemn times, because they were "not at the beginning of the month, nor "distinguished from other days by any na- "tural sign, but only by the appointment "of the law, which uses these words con- "cerning this goat peculiarly, to pluck out "of men's thoughts those inveterate and "pernicious opinions of the Gentiles, who "had long sacrificed to the moon at this "time as they did to the sun at his rising, "and when he entered into the several "signs."

Mor. Neb. p. iii. c. xlvi.

Patrick on the place.

The idolatrous worship of the moon was of so dangerous consequence, that it

was very wise to take particular notice of it in a ritual, of which one design was to preserve the Hebrews from idolatry: how ready were the Hebrews to fall into this very idolatry! *The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, that they may make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.* So infatuated were they to this idolatry, that they expressly tell the Prophet, while they worshipped the queen of heaven they had plenty, were well, and saw no evil, but since they left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, they wanted all things. An idolatry so prevailing among all orders of people, kings, and princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, well deserved the care of the Mosaical ritual; and what could be a wiser care than to make the occasion of their idolatry an act of religion to Jehovah?

Jeremiah, vii. 18.

Jeremiah, xliv, 17, &c.

As the ritual directed a service for every month, it likewise directed a peculiar service for the first day of the seventh month: *And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work; it is the day of blowing the trumpets unto you.* This month, though called here the seventh month, was anciently the first, and the new moon which began that month

Feast of the trumpets, or new year.

Numb. xxix. 1.

began their new year also; and it continued to be the beginning of their civil year, though another month was appointed for the beginning of their sacred year; for thus God commanded in the land of Egypt: *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you.* This is a sufficient intimation, that before this command the year had another beginning, but was changed from autumn to the spring. Their sacred year, or computation of time for their holy convocations, was reckoned from the month in which they kept their first passover, and in which they left Egypt, and were delivered out of the land of their bondage: in this new way of reckoning, that which before was their first is now their seventh month, and the new moon of this now seventh month is made the feast of trumpets. On this day, besides the blowing of trumpets, there were particular offerings directed, over and above the sacrifices provided for every day, and for their new moons: *And ye shall offer,* says the ritual, *a burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord, one young bullock, one ram and seven lambs of the first year, without blemish; and their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil; three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram, and one tenth deal for one lamb throughout the seven lambs; and one*

Exod. xii. 2.

Reland's Antiq. Hebr. p. 508.

kid of the goats for a sin-offering; to make an atonement for you. The ritual then has a particular regard to the return of the new year, according to the ancient reckoning, supposed to be the reckoning among the patriarchs, and from the creation: it might, not unlikely, have some notice taken of it before as a festival; it is, therefore, in another place, called a *memorial of blowing of trumpets.* Numb. xxix. 2, 3, 4, 5. Leviticus, xxiii. 24.

It is not easy to tell, says Bishop Patrick on the place, of what this blowing of trumpets was a memorial; yet he observes, that all nations made great rejoicings at the beginning of the year, and that those solemnities were often attended with sounding of trumpets. God was pleased to order rejoicing among his own people, but in honour of himself, on the beginning of the new year, to keep them from the idolatrous worship of the sun, as the lord or king of heaven, and to keep in their own minds a just sense that it was their God, Jehovah, who alone gave them good years, whose mercies were renewed from month to month, and from day to day. Bishop Patrick, however, carries this memorial of blowing of trumpets yet farther; and considers it as a memorial of the creation of the world, which was an autumn, on which account the ancient beginning of the year was at that time, and still continues among the eastern nations. This may

It is observed by Grotius, and mentioned with approbation by Bishop Patrick, that these words, *a sin-offering unto the Lord,* were designed to put them in mind, what was the proper object of worship at these new moons; that these sacrifices were offered to Jehovah, and not to the moon. "This," says the Bishop, "was observed long ago by Rabbi Bechai: "a goat was offered to extirpate the reli- "gion of those who worshipped the moon, "which makes the Scriptures say ex- "pressly, *unto the Lord.*" And Maimonides more largely: "This sin-offering is "peculiarly said to be *unto the Lord,* lest "any one should think this goat to be a "sacrifice unto the moon, after the man- "ner of the Egyptians, which was not "necessary to be said of the goats offered "at other solemn times, because they were "not at the beginning of the month, nor "distinguished from other days by any na- "tural sign, but only by the appointment "of the law, which uses these words con- "cerning this goat peculiarly, to pluck out "of men's thoughts those inveterate and "pernicious opinions of the Gentiles, who "had long sacrificed to the moon at this "time as they did to the sun at his rising, "and when he entered into the several "signs."

Mor. Neb. p. iii. c. xlvi.

Patrick on the place.

The idolatrous worship of the moon was of so dangerous consequence, that it

was very wise to take particular notice of it in a ritual, of which one design was to preserve the Hebrews from idolatry: how ready were the Hebrews to fall into this very idolatry! *The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, that they may make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.* So infatuated were they to this idolatry, that they expressly tell the Prophet, while they worshipped the queen of heaven they had plenty, were well, and saw no evil, but since they left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, they wanted all things. An idolatry so prevailing among all orders of people, kings, and princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, well deserved the care of the Mosaical ritual; and what could be a wiser care than to make the occasion of their idolatry an act of religion to Jehovah?

Jeremiah, vii. 18.

Jeremiah, xliv, 17, &c.

As the ritual directed a service for every month, it likewise directed a peculiar service for the first day of the seventh month: *And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work; it is the day of blowing the trumpets unto you.* This month, though called here the seventh month, was anciently the first, and the new moon which began that month

Feast of the trumpets, or new year.

Numb. xxix. 1.

began their new year also; and it continued to be the beginning of their civil year, though another month was appointed for the beginning of their sacred year; for thus God commanded in the land of Egypt: *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you.* This is a sufficient intimation, that before this command the year had another beginning, but was changed from autumn to the spring. Their sacred year, or computation of time for their holy convocations, was reckoned from the month in which they kept their first passover, and in which they left Egypt, and were delivered out of the land of their bondage: in this new way of reckoning, that which before was their first is now their seventh month, and the new moon of this now seventh month is made the feast of trumpets. On this day, besides the blowing of trumpets, there were particular offerings directed, over and above the sacrifices provided for every day, and for their new moons: *And ye shall offer,* says the ritual, *a burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord, one young bullock, one ram and seven lambs of the first year, without blemish; and their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil; three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram, and one tenth deal for one lamb throughout the seven lambs; and one*

Exod. xii. 2.

Reland's Antiq. Hebr. p. 508.

kid of the goats for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you. The ritual then has a particular regard to the return of the new year, according to the ancient reckoning, supposed to be the reckoning among the patriarchs, and from the creation: it might, not unlikely, have some notice taken of it before as a festival; it is, therefore, in another place, called a *memorial of blowing of trumpets.* Numb. xxix. 2, 3, 4, 5. Leviticus, xxiii. 24.

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well be understood of an acknowledgment of the goodness of God in the year past, and an address to Jehovah, not to the sun, to bless the year to come. Perhaps there is need of no other observation than this, that it was a memorial of the sole power of Jehovah over all seasons of the year, over all the courses of the sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven, that, how prone soever the world might be to honour the sun as the king, and the moon as the queen of heaven, and to ascribe prosperous days and years to their influence and favour, the Hebrew nation should often call to remembrance, that the sun and moon were themselves the creatures of Jehovah; that he alone appointed, he alone directed their courses, and they had all their influences from him; that he ought to be acknowledged the proper author of all blessings the world receives from their influence.

5.

Seventh year, or sabbath of the land.

Levit. xxv. 1 to 8.

By another direction of the ritual, God appointed a sabbath for the Holy Land, as well as a sabbath for the people: *And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord. Six years shalt thou sow thy field, and six years shalt thou prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof. And in the seventh year*

shall be a sabbath of rest to the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest, thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of the vine undressed; for it is a year of rest to the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, and for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat. This direction, which appoints a sabbath to the land, requires that they should not sow their land, nor prune their vineyards, but omit the usual works of husbandry for that year, as they were to do no servile work on their weekly sabbaths, and they were to leave what grew of itself without husbandry, in common for their cattle as well as their servants and strangers. This has been thought an hardship, and many will likely be disposed to think so still, for an whole nation every seventh year to be deprived of the produce of their estates: it was very hard, some say, to lose so considerable a property, and might endanger besides the safety of the whole nation, and bring a famine upon the land. The wise lawgiver was sensible of this objection, and therefore provided beforehand a full answer to it, whenever it should be made:

And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.

Levit. xxv. 20, 21.

The faithful performance of this promise was a constant and a sufficient answer to all such objections; but, were there not also some proper reasons observable for the appointment, *that the land should keep a sabbath unto the Lord?* Some have observed, it was a wise design thus to fix on their memory the account Moses gave in his history of the creation of all things in six days, and the rest of the seventh, and to put them in mind that Jehovah their God was supreme Lord of the whole world, as he was the Creator of all; and that his blessing was what they were to trust to for the fruitfulness and increase of the land, which they held of God, as his gift; which, therefore, he might grant to them, with what limitations, and on what conditions he thought fit, yet assuring themselves of his blessing, if they were steadfast to their covenant with him as their God. The ritual itself seems to suggest this reason: *Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill and dwell there*

Levit. xxv. 18, 19.

in safety. Here was promised a constant repeated testimony of the care, power, and faithfulness of Jehovah their God, an encouragement to their faithfulness to Jehovah as his people. Such an extraordinary fruitfulness of every sixth year in the promised land, was a very remarkable evidence of the particular providence of Jehovah over Israel his people; it gave them assured hope of his peculiar favour and blessing; and that He who had given them the Land of Promise would secure to them the possession of it, if they continued to do his statutes and to keep his judgments. Thus this constitution was honourable to the God of Israel, of useful instruction and encouragement to the sons of Abraham, as heirs of the promise.

Jubilee 50 years.

The ritual yet further appoints another sabbath of fifty years, upon the revolution of every seventh sabbath of the land. Thus the law: *And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years, and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.* Here is another solemn remembrance of Jehovah, the Creator of all things, and in particular as the King of Israel. There is an apparent wisdom in this ritual to make many of the same rites both political and religious; for the true state of the Hebrew nation being a theocracy, the constitutions of that govern-

Levit. xxv. 8.

ment are both civil and religious in many points relating to Jehovah, both as their God and King; both which characters, so united, were of consequence to enforce the authority of Jehovah, and the obedience of the Abrahamic family.

This great sabbath of the jubilee was to be sanctified as other sabbatical years, in
11. which they were not to sow or reap, but to leave the whole fruits of the land in common: but what was the peculiar rite of the
10. jubilee was this; *And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.* The Hebrews had a portion of land divided to each family by lot. This portion of the promised land they held of God, and were not to dispose of it as their property in fee-simple. Therefore the law
Levit. xxv. 23. directs, *The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.* Hence no Hebrew could part with his estate in the Holy Land but for a term of years only, from one jubilee to another.

There is one evident reason for this constitution, as it served to preserve both the numbers and the strength of the Hebrew church and nation, an instance of the wisdom and care of Jehovah, as their

God and as their King. This made a strict care to preserve the genealogies and descents of their families, a very concerning interest, when their titles to their estates and successions depended upon them: and so the genealogies of families might be depended upon for many ages; as from David, suppose, to Zerobabel, and from Zerobabel to Jesus Christ; and it had this great advantage, to put them in mind the land they inhabited was not their possession in property; Jehovah was the true proprietor of it: they held it of him by homage and fealty, and were to hold it by indefeasable title, they continuing in their allegiance; otherwise, they were to remember God could cast them out of the land, as he did the Canaanites before them; *For the land is mine,* says God, *for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.* The further uses of these constitutions will appear in a more proper place. Part III.

Passover. The ritual of Moses had fixed the presence of the Shechinah in the most holy place, and confined the ritual worship to this presence. There was then but one temple and one altar, and but one place for the ritual worship, throughout the whole Hebrew nation. It was fit, on many accounts, that the whole nation, in whose names the public worship was performed, should appear before the Presence as often as would be convenient; the ritual, there-

fore, appoints a personal attendance three times in the year: *Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out of Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty. And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field, and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.*

Exodus, xxiii. 14, 15.

These three feasts were the principal in the Hebrew ritual. They were appointed at very convenient seasons of the year, in spring, summer, and autumn. They are represented by Mr. Reland, as bringing to remembrance three signal blessings of great importance never to be forgotten—bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt, giving them the law, and putting them into possession of the Land of Promise *. Rites of such consequence deserve a particular attention.

To begin with the passover: while the

* Institutis tribus festis majoribus, paschate, pentecoste, et festo tabernaculorum, in memoriam trium beneficiorum insignium, quæ Deus in populum Israelitarum contulit, egressum ex Egypto, lationem legis, et possessionem terræ.—*Reland, Ant. Heb.* p. 444, 445.

children of Israel were yet in Egypt, God commanded Moses, *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.* This month, afterwards called Nisan, which answered nearly our March, and the spring equinox, was made the first month of their sacred year; or all their festivals and holy convocations were to be reckoned from it, though still the month called Tisri answering our September, and the autumnal equinox, was left the beginning of their civil year.

They are directed, *in the tenth day of this month,* to take a lamb for every house, without blemish. They were to kill this lamb on the fourteenth day, in the evening, and to sprinkle the door-posts of the house with the blood of it; to eat the flesh of it rost with fire, and unleavened bread and bitter herbs; to let nothing of it remain unto the morning, or if there did, to burn it with fire. The reason why it was called the Lord's Passover, is thus given: when God should pass through the land of Egypt to smite all the first-born, when he saw the blood upon their houses, he would pass over them. Such was the first passover. But the law directed this day should be a memorial, and kept a feast to the Lord throughout all generations. The rule for keeping this feast in after-times directs, *Seven days shall ye eat un-*

Exod. xii. 1 to 10.

12, 13.

14.

leavened bread; this is called the bread of affliction (for thou camest out of the land of Egypt in haste), that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life. Deuteron. xvi. 3. The Apostle makes unleavened bread a symbol also of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. v. 8. *And in the first day* (it follows) there shall be *an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you: no manner of work shall be done in them, save*
15, 16. *that which every man must eat.* Concerning this festival the law further directs, *This is the ordinance of the passover; there shall no stranger eat thereof, but every man-servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof; a foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof: in one hour shall it be eaten. Thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house, neither shall ye break a bone thereof: all the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one who is born in the land, for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.* It needs no explanation to show how proper it was to have a festival-memorial of the peculiar favour of God to

the family of Abraham, in bringing them out of the bondage of Egypt, into the promised land, or how proper this festival was to be such a memorial, and a further confirmation of their hope in God's peculiar favour to them, as his peculiar people.

As the time when this festival was kept was the beginning of the harvest in the Holy Land, the ritual made it one part of the service, to bring a sheaf of the first fruits, to be waved before the Lord, to be accepted for them, with which they were to offer an he-lamb without blemish, of the first year for a burnt-offering unto the Lord. As this feast of unleavened bread was appointed also for seven days, so to each of those days there was appointed a burnt-offering. And as the passover was a proper sacrifice, so the ritual directs, according to the general law concerning sacrifices; *Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there.*

Levit. xxiii. 10, 11, 12.

Deut. xvi. 2.

The second of the three great feasts was what is usually called the feast of Pentecost, at the distance of seven weeks, or fifty days, after the offering of the wave-sheaf, at the feast of the passover: so the law; *And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even*

Pentecost.

Levit. xxiii. 15, 16.

unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord; that is, as Bishop Patrick observes, of new corn made into loaves, which was the first-fruits of harvest: it is therefore called *the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest.*

Exodus, xxxiv.22.

At this time, when the wheat as well as barley was ripe, the ritual most reasonably required an act of homage to God, in solemn acknowledgment of his goodness, as in bringing them into the promised land, so in blessing them in it, and giving them the fruits of it, according to promise. It was highly reasonable, with this view, that, besides the wave-loaves, there should be the several kinds of offerings, burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, and peace-offerings, which the ritual therefore directs, as appears at large in the law itself. The sacrifices were proper for the day, and proper to be offered with the wave-loaves, as the first-fruits of their corn harvest; and were a very fit acknowledgment of God's supreme authority, of his goodness, truth, and faithfulness; that they owed the increase of their land to the continued favour of Jehovah, as their God: it taught their own happiness, as his people, as under his peculiar care and protection; a justifying and exciting reason to be faithful in their obedience, and steadfast in their covenant with Jehovah.

Levit. xxxiii. 15 to 22.

The last of these great feasts was the feast of tabernacles: this festival was appointed for the fifteenth day of the seventh month, that is, in the sacred account, from the new beginning of the year in March, and so was fixed to about the autumnal equinox, answering some part of our September: *The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles, for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work. Seven days shall ye offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.* Feast of tabernacles. Levit. xxiii. 34. 35, 36.

The sacrifices appointed in particular for this solemnity are mentioned at large, and are more than what the ritual appointed for any other: *And ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year: they shall be without blemish. And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil; three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals unto each ram of the two rams, and a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs, and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, besides the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.* These sacri- Numb. xxix. 12 to 17.

fices were to be repeated for seven days, only the bullocks were to be lessened, one for each day; so that twelve bullocks only were to be offered on the second day, eleven on the third day, and seven only on the seventh day.

In the celebration of this festival, the ritual further directs; *And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.* Again, *Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:* for which the law itself gives this good reason, *That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.* The time of this festival was chosen when they had fully *gathered in the fruit of their land,* their grapes and olives, as well as their corn. It therefore had the same general reason with the preceding festivals, to acknowledge the goodness of God in giving them so beautiful a land, and owning it was to him they owed the yearly plenty of its produce. It was useful, and therefore reasonable, at such times to remember their bondage in Egypt, and the want and fatigue they suffered in a barren wilderness, that they might put a greater

Levit. xxiii. 40.

42.

43.

39.

value on their present ease and plenty. The reason of these rites will thus easily appear, if you consider them as so many days of thanksgiving to God, who engaged them to his service by so many blessings, and laid so many obligations upon them, as his favoured people.

Day of expiation.

There was another solemn service appointed for this month: *And this shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord;* or, *to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.* Levit. xvi. 29. 30. 34.

The ritual for this solemnity is very particular; but it serves so well to explain the nature of the Hebrew worship, and to give so much light to the doctrines of the Christian sacrifice and atonement, that it well deserves our attention to understand it.

In the service of this day, then, the high priest (and his successors in after-times) was to bring a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. 3. He was then to put on the linen garments, the common holy garments in which the common priests officiated, when they offered their sacrifices; and as they were

4. holy garments, he was to wash his flesh in water, and so put them on: then he was to take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin-
5. offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering.

First, the high priest is directed to offer his own sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and
6. for his house; which showed that a priest who offers an atonement for others, ought to be holy himself; and that the high priest under the law was not so holy, but was to be sanctified by making an atonement for himself, and for his house: in which you may observe the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle to the Hebrews justly argues, Heb. vii. 26, 27, 28. The high priest, thus prepared, is directed
Levit.xvi. 7. to *take the two goats* (for the children of Israel), *and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.* He is then appointed to *cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord* (or upon the goat which was to be offered unto Jehovah), *and the other lot for*
8. *the scape-goat*, to be sent into the wilderness to bear the iniquities of the people, into a land not inhabited. Aaron was then to bring the bullock for his own sin-offer-
11. ing, and kill it. This done, he was to take a censer of burning coals from the altar, and his hands full of sweet incense, and
12. bring it within the vail: he was to put the

incense upon the fire before the Lord in such a manner, that the cloud (or smoke of the incense) might cover the mercy-seat; and he was to sprinkle the blood of 33.
the bullock (his own sacrifice) with his finger upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, seven times. Thus was the high priest to be cleansed and sanctified, 14.
that he might be fit to appear before the Shechinah, the more immediate presence of Jehovah, in the most holy place.

After this part of the service which more immediately regarded himself as high priest, he is to kill the goat of the sin-offering, that was for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the 15.
mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. He was to make an atonement for the holy place, for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, by sprinkling the blood upon it with his finger seven times, to cleanse it, and to hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. Levit. xvi. 16 to 20.

With respect to the other goat, which was to be sent into the wilderness, the ritual directs the high priest should *lay both* 21.
his hands on the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the

22. *hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.*

23. It should seem, by the mention made of the high priest's *putting off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and leaving them there,* and *putting on his garments and coming forth to offer the burnt-offering,* which Bishop Patrick understands of the daily evening sacrifice, that there is something in the observation of the masters, that the high priest changed his garments according to the different services of the day, wearing sometimes only the four linen garments, sometimes the other four rich or golden garments peculiar to himself; but how often and at what particular services, does not appear from the ritual. If any desire to know what the masters think of it, they may find it in the Reland. But I purposely omit what the ritual itself does not express, because it is the rational of the ritual only, as given by Moses, we are inquiring after.

Reland's Ant. Heb. p. 496.

It will be proper here to make a remark or two on the general nature, design, and use of this part of the ritual, as it is so eminent a part of the worship of the Hebrew church.

Is not this ritual plainly designed in the whole plan of it, to keep in constant remembrance, that the presence of Jehovah

in their temple made it a sanctuary; that Jehovah, there present, was the proper and only object of religious worship, to whom they were to offer all their gifts and sacrifices, and to direct their confessions, their prayers, and their praises? It plainly showed, that the presence of Jehovah was the presence of an holy God; that iniquity, transgressions, and sins, were displeasing to him, and, unless forgiven, would continue the displeasure of God to the sinner. It however taught them at the same time, that Jehovah their God was merciful and gracious. He was seated on a mercy-seat: he appointed sin-offerings, and promised to accept them; and they should be clean before the Lord from all their sins, that is, all sins for which the sacrifices of the law were an atonement; for the ritual appointed no sacrifices or atonement for moral crimes, as the Psalmist expressly observes concerning his own case. Psalm li.

When we consider this plan of ritual worship, we have another remark which offers itself, that it is the ritual of a national, and not a personal worship. The whole of this worship is fixed to the place of the presence where Jehovah dwelt; nothing can be plainer from the whole ritual than this, that the whole worship of the Hebrew church in their sacrifices and festivals was fixed to the one temple and one altar, and that it was absolutely forbid,

upon any pretence, to offer any sacrifice, on any occasion, but before the Presence, or Shechinah. The worship, then, of the Hebrews was not at all directed by this ritual, as many have imagined, very ignorantly, as personal, or as family, or as more public in their towns, or cities, throughout their whole land; so great reason there is to distinguish between their synagogue and temple worship: whatever methods they had for instruction, for prayers and praises, in their synagogues, they seem to have been left to the ancient customs of the Abrahamic worship, and to be directed by the common rules of reason and discretion; for the ritual left them as they were, without any new directions concerning them. These were plain and natural, and, in the principal parts of worship, differing but little from the present worship of the Christian assemblies. The rational, then, of the Hebrew ritual is not to be considered as any part of the rule for the common worship of private families, or public synagogues, or private persons, as it was not formed, nor ever designed to be formed, for that use; though these public acts of a national religion were, as we shall see in its proper place, of very useful instruction to every particular person; and they were engaged to use them personally, when they were to appear before the Presence, yet they were not to be used throughout

all Israel, any where but before the Presence, or where the Shechinah dwelt, between the cherubim, over the mercy-seat, or in the most holy place. All objections, then, against the ritual, as the worship of the church, any where but at the temple, are truly impertinent, and can prove nothing but the ignorance of those who shall make use of them.

From hence also we may observe, what little reason there is to accuse this ritual, as requiring a service of burdensome rites and expensive ceremonies. But how groundless and unjust are such censures! The expense was national, and must be easy when defrayed by the whole nation. The burden of the service, what it was, was borne chiefly by the priests and Levites, and was scarce any trouble at all to any particular Israelite. What reason can there be to complain of burdensome rites and expensive sacrifices, when the ritual itself shows every thing moderate? Each day cost but two lambs, with their meat-offerings and drink-offerings, about half a peck of flour, and three pints of wine and oil to each lamb. The additional sacrifices on the Sabbaths were but just as much more: the festivals on which the ritual directed more sacrifices, and thereby more expense, were very few in a year; the principal but once: many of the sacrifices, and the most numerous, as the lambs at

the passover, remained the private property of the offerer, and ought to be considered as the provision of their own table for their own family. So that it has been estimated by a very large allowance, that if all the expenses of the public worship were to be levied by equal proportion on the tribes of Israel, it would not be an expense of one hundred pounds per annum to each tribe.

The Mosaical ritual was, however, in comparison with the Abrahamic and Christian dispensations, without question, a yoke of bondage. The personal attendance before the Presence, the occasional sacrifices and lustrations required by the ritual, were troublesome and expensive; in respect of which, the Christian dispensation is said to be a light and easy yoke. Yet it is without all foundation, that some persons have taken a liberty of accusing this ritual, as intolerably troublesome and expensive; it was not more so, than a ritual that could answer the design of this ritual must have been; not more so than the number of the priests of Baal, their benefices, their cuttings in their worship, and other ceremonies, show superstition had introduced among them.

In this plain view of the Hebrew ritual, how many common objections will vanish at once, and appear to be not only groundless, but ridiculous! I omit for the present the reasons why it was necessary

there should be this public worship; why it should be confined to the place of the Presence only, and not to be allowed the Israelites in their several cities and synagogues, as it will come more properly under consideration in another place.

CHAP. V.

Ritual of the Hebrew Nation, as God's Church and peculiar People, the holy Seed of Abraham, with whom was the Covenant and Promise.

Ritual of the Hebrews, as an holy nation, and the seed of Abraham.

THE ritual of the Hebrew church had a further view than to give rules for their public worship, and settle the manner how they were to appear before the Presence of Jehovah. The Hebrew nation was to be considered also as the church of God, an holy nation, or the people of his holiness; they were called to a peculiar holiness in virtue of a particular covenant between God and them. This is a reason assigned by Moses for some of his laws, *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.* Deut. xiv. 2.

There was a solemn covenant between God and Abraham and his seed, a foundation of their consecration to Jehovah above all other people. This covenant was made

with Abraham, and had subsisted many years before the giving of the law. God then appointed to Abraham and to his family a visible mark or seal in testimony of this covenant: *And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised.* Thus the father of the Hebrew nation was consecrated to God, as the one true God, and to keep his family distinct and separate from such as were forsaking the faith and worship of the one true God, and running fast into idolatry. A covenant being made by God with Abraham and his seed, it was proper to preserve the memory of it by some signs or marks, which should be a constant memorial of the promises and blessings on God's part, should admonish the seed of Abraham, as holy to Jehovah, *to walk before him and be perfect,* and excite a care to preserve the privileges and honour of God's peculiar people, in his presence and favour above all nations of the earth, and to avoid whatever might deprive them of an happiness much above whatever any other enjoyed.

Genesis, xvii. 1, 2.

9, 10.

It became, then, a general reason, why the seed of Abraham should be separated from all other people by the observation of

some particular rites, peculiar to themselves, to show openly they were worshippers of the one true God, whose excellent nature distinguished him from all idols or inferior gods in holiness and purity, as well as in greatness and majesty. It is a reason therefore given in their ritual, not to defile themselves with any creeping thing; *for I am the Lord your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* Levit. xi. 44.

As there was to be some distinction between an holy nation and a profane world, for so the nations were called who had corrupted or lost the knowledge of the one true God, and polluted themselves with idolatrous principles and impure practices and customs; it was fit and wise that distinction should be some visible sign or token that should bring to mind the covenant between them and Jehovah, the engagements they were under to serve him as the true God, and as their God.

At the beginning, the rite of circumcision seems to have been principally, if not solely, the distinction of the Abrahamic family, till the Mosaical ritual: in which many things are declared unclean; many things, not only of common use, but in high esteem with idolatrous nations, were declared abominable to the Hebrews.

When the family of Abraham was small and few in number, it was more easily preserved, and the rite of circumcision seemed sufficient; but when the children of Israel grew numerous, and the idolatry of Egypt had so infected their minds, when it appeared how easily they were misled by the idolatry of the Canaanites, it became necessary to add new fences to the law, to erect a stronger partition-wall, which might be a more effectual preservation. Now, constitutions which shall appear fit to answer these ends, and most likely to attain them, will, for that very reason, appear fit to be chosen and appointed by a wise judgment, even where there is no other reason in the thing itself, to direct the choice of it, previous to this design and this use of it.

When a ritual distinction was to be made, rites that would well answer that end, fit to be appointed, though there was

It may be proper to explain this a little more particularly; especially since many seem greatly to mistake this question, and, as I conceive, have very much perverted it from its true state; as if the things made unclean by the ritual, must have some real moral uncleanness in themselves, such as made it fit to forbid them on their own account in a religion that comes from God; when the true state of the question, both in fact and reason, seems to be this, whether it being now fit to distinguish the Hebrew nation, as a people holy to Jehovah, and consecrated to his service, when

it was of so great use to raise a wall that should separate the family of Abraham from their heathen neighbours; the question, I say, seems to be, whether this design being proposed, itself is a sufficient reason to appoint a ritual, and to choose such as shall best answer this design, though there was no previous reason or moral law to require them; and though, except for their fitness to answer this end, they might have been left indifferent, as they were before the making of the ritual. We should carefully attend to this observation; it will serve to clear many things in relation to this ritual, on reasons common to all rituals, the general reasons and ends of which are of a moral nature; and as far as any parts of a ritual truly answer that design, they have themselves a real moral reason and fitness too: for instance, washing with water, as a rite of purification, has no direct moral reason or obligation; yet supposing a reverence for God, and a sense of that purity which becomes his worshippers, may be helped by ritual instructions and admonitions; that the purity of religion may be better preserved, and the danger of superstition better prevented, by the direction of a rite of plain and easy instruction and of decent use; then, as far as purification by water answers these ends, there is a moral reason and fitness in the use of it. If it shall be found, that

no previous moral reason for such appointment.

putting away the filth of the flesh, shall usefully teach *putting off all filthiness of spirit as well as flesh,* and *the answer of a good conscience towards God;* if it shall set aside idolatrous purifications by fire and wind, and especially by blood, thought among the heathen a purification of greater virtue, from a communion with demons; these ends, as wise and truly moral, are sufficient reasons for directing the use of water as a religious rite. So soon, then, as there was a moral reason for appointing a ritual, such rites as were fit and proper to answer those moral reasons, were themselves moral as of moral use. You easily see how this observation is applicable to many ritual prohibitions, as well as to ritual observances. Suppose there is no direct moral reason why the eating of blood should be strictly forbid; and suppose it might be allowed as freely as any other food, as having no moral reason against it; yet if the prohibition of any food whatsoever would in some circumstances be of great use to guard against idolatry, and keep from joining with persons who constantly made an idolatrous use of eating blood, as a means of communion with their dæmons, or of having fellowship with devils; so the Apostle justly calls the heathen feasts, with their idolatrous rites, *drinking the cup of devils,* and *being partakers of the table of devils:*

1 Cor. x. 20, 21.

in such cases as these, a prohibition of such food as has a fitness to attain any degree of moral good, really gives a proportional degree of true moral goodness to such a ritual constitution, and continues the obligation of it so long as that moral use remains; but when that moral reason ceases, the obligation ceases with it, and the use of such food becomes indifferent, as it was before.

Whatever then shall appear recommended as a proper distinguishing mark of the Hebrew nation as an holy nation, consecrated to the service of the one true God in opposition to all idolatry, had a reason why it should be made a part of the ritual, from that very use, without looking further for any other reasons, or moral fitness in themselves to become rites of religion. Whatever usages, then, either by ancient custom or general esteem, had obtained the reputation of an honourable distinction, either in the opinion of the Hebrews themselves, or of their neighbour nations; whatever would likely call to remembrance their useful separation from a profane idolatrous world; whatever would be an easy and useful admonition of inward purity and holiness of spirit, or be a preservative against the prevailing corruptions of the world, or like to keep them from apostacy; all these were wisely appointed

a part of their ritual, and were of good use in promoting the wise designs of it.

Consider, then, somewhat more particularly what this ritual distinction is, and it will easily appear that the objections raised against it with so much confidence have no foundation in right reason, but are the fruits of ignorance or of prejudice.

Circumcision. To begin with circumcision. This was a rite in use long before the Mosaical law; it was a ritual appointed to Abraham the father of the nation. *This is my covenant*, said God to Abraham, *which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you.* Gen. xvii. 10, 11. It is not material, I think, to the subject before us, to enter into any of the disputes, or even into the inquiries of learned men, as to the original of this rite, especially among other nations besides the Hebrews: the authority of the Hebrew history plainly makes it an original constitution to Abraham; and the great reputation of Abraham, with the fear of Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews, spread over the nations by his wonderful works in bringing his favoured people out of Egypt into the promised land, are very probable reasons why they might be desirous to avert his displeasure from themselves, and court his pro-

tection. Their very principles of idolatry, without any respect for the Hebrew nation, might teach them to consider Jehovah the God of the Hebrews as a very powerful God, and fit to be honoured among their other gods; they might receive circumcision as what would be acceptable to him, and thus court him, according to an usual and well-known custom of the heathen, to leave their enemies, and come over, as it were, to their side.

Now this rite was a token of the great importance of the covenant between God and Abraham, and his seed after him, as well as it brought to remembrance the covenant itself. It was very fit to put them in constant remembrance how carefully they should preserve the honour of God's peculiar people, and of the holy seed of Abraham, by avoiding all intermarriages with the uncircumcised, and who therefore were not of the holy seed, and keep themselves from too familiar conversation with persons who might corrupt them with their own idolatrous principles or practices. Circumcision, then, was a rite that united the family of Abraham, as having the same faith, worship, and privileges, and kept them separate from other nations, who had corrupted the faith and worship of the true God, and had lost the privileges of a true church. This is well expressed by the ju-

dicious Hebrew master*: as circumcision was a rite of evident distinction, and a rite so difficult that none were like to choose but from a principle of religious faith and obedience, so it was a most proper rite to teach the obligations of an holy nation in purity of heart and holiness of life, of which circumcision was so proper a figurative instruction. Thus Moses himself represented it in an exhortation to the Hebrews: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee,* that is, as an holy nation to Jehovah, *but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him,*
Deut. x. 12. *and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?* He expresses these obligations in allusion to the
16. instructions of circumcision; *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.* This is well ex-
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* Sed est adhuc alia quoque ratio valde necessaria in circumcisione, ut videlicet, illi qui sunt hujus fidei, (h. e. qui credunt unitatem) habeant unum quoddam signum, quod illos conjungat, et ne quis alius, qui non est ex illis dicere possit se ex illis esse, nam solet quandoque homo, id vel propter suum commodum, vel in aliorum contumeliam et detrimentum facere. Sed hæc actio, circumcisionis nempe, ita comparata est, ut nemo vel sibi vel liberis suis, nisi propter fidem et religionem eam sit facturus; nam non est levis aliqua cruris læsio, vel brachii adustio, sed res durissima et difficillima.—*Maimon. Mor. Neboc.* part iii. c. xlix. p. 195.

Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live. This not only shows that circumcision was designed for moral instruction, but to teach the inward circumcision of the heart, preferable in this law to the outward circumcision of the flesh in the acceptance and approbation of God, and recommended as a greater blessing to themselves. Thus God encourages their sincere repentance, as humbling their uncircumcised hearts: *If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember:* this is called *the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth,* says God, *out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God.* This great use of circumcision gave St. Paul just reason to argue, *For he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.*

Levit. xxvi. 41, 42.

45.

Rom. ii. 29.

Circumcision, then, was such a visible mark in the flesh, as was very fit to be a sign to all the seed of Abraham, that they were to account themselves an holy nation, as his seed; that they were obliged to keep up an holy nation to Jehovah in that family, and in so doing assure them-

selves of the peculiar favour of Jehovah, such as he showed to their forefathers as their God. Circumcision further taught them, the covenant between God and them required not barely a ceremonial holiness, but, what was the true meaning of it, to circumcise their hearts, so as to love and to honour the Lord their God with all their hearts, and in all the acts of true righteousness and goodness. Even the difficulty itself of the rite had its advantages, as no persons would join themselves to them who might likely corrupt them by evil principles and manners; for very few, when grown up especially to elder years, would be willing to receive such a rite, which must be attended with considerable difficulty, from any lower reasons than a consent to the Hebrew faith, and desire of an interest in the privileges of the Hebrew church; an excellent means of preserving the purity of the faith, worship, and family of Abraham, as an holy seed to Jehovah.

Uncleanness of foods.

The Hebrews, by their ritual, had other rites of distinction besides circumcision; their ritual made a distinction between foods clean and unclean, to show what they were allowed to eat, and what food they were to abstain from, as an holy nation to Jehovah. The ritual gives itself a general reason for this distinction of foods: *Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between un-*

clean fowls and clean; and ye shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean; and ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord (Jehovah) am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. This relation of the Hebrews to Jehovah is given as a reason why they should not do what was allowed to strangers and aliens. *Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien; for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.* You see, what was allowed to an alien is forbid to the Hebrews as an holy people, not because morally evil, or therefore unlawful on a moral account, but unbecoming a people consecrated to the service of Jehovah; and hence, what the ritual allowed the Hebrews for food was of best esteem in common use, and what was forbid was of least esteem, and reckoned too mean for a good table; and, as Dr. Spencer observes, continues so in the eastern nations to the present times *.

Levit. xx. 25, 26.

Deut. xiv. 21.

* Hoc audacter asseramus, quod animalia omnia Judæis in cibum concessa, in usu ac pretio apud orientales hodieque habeantur; et pleraque Judæis interdicta, à mensis saltem elegantioribus, et rebus lautioribus utentium etiamnum abligentur.—*Spencer, Leg. Heb.* p. i. c. 5, § 11.

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The whole of this ritual, as to beasts, birds, fish, and creeping things, are mentioned very particularly in the law itself: not to transcribe the whole chapter, which every one may easily consult for themselves, it may be sufficient just to mention the more general directions.

Levit. xi. 3. *Whatever parteth the hoof and is cloven-*
4 to 9. *footed and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat:* but such as did not chew the cud and divide the hoof, that
9 to 13. is, did not do both, are declared to be unclean. Of fish they were allowed to eat all that had fins and scales, but all that had not fins and scales were to be accounted unclean. Among birds, the ritual forbids in particular the eating of several by name
13 to 24. as unclean, such as the eagle, vulture, kite, raven, owl, &c.

29, 30. The ritual gives also directions concerning creeping things and insects: the weasel, mouse, &c. are declared unclean,
31. and whosoever shall touch them when dead is pronounced unclean; and in gene-
41. ral *every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth shall be an abomination, it shall not be eaten.*

On a nearer consideration of this part of the ritual, you easily perceive that the food allowed the Hebrew nation, as an holy people, were the gentler sort of creatures, and of most common use, such as were bred about their houses and in their fields,

and were, in a sort, domestic: they were creatures of the cleanest feeding, and which gave the most wholesome nourishment, and were of a better taste, and might be had in greater plenty and perfection by a proper care of their breeding and feeding; they seem, therefore, naturally fit to be chosen as a better kind of food. And if it became the Hebrews, as an holy nation, to have any ritual distinction of foods, could any thing have been devised more proper than to prefer such foods as were the best foods, most easy to be had, and in the greatest perfection, most useful and most profitable to the industrious husbandman? Was not this much better than to give encouragement to hunting of wild beasts and following birds of prey, no ways so fit for food nor so easy to be had, and hardly consistent with the innocency and mildness of a pastoral and domestic life? Such a difference as the ritual makes between foods, was wisely appointed to encourage the improvement of their ground, to contribute to the health of their bodies, and to the ease of their employment in life, no inconsiderable part of the blessings of the promised land. Such constitutions were likely to give an honour and dignity to a people who appear eminent for customs very useful and very profitable. Such political wisdom, so well suited to the particular state of the Hebrew nation in the

promised land, ought to be considered as *one* good reason, though it is not the sole reason, for such constitutions: the character of Jehovah, as King of Israel, as well as the God of Abraham and his seed, evidently shows a reason for this observation. It is plain, wise lawgivers may have many reasons for the same constitutions; perhaps not one of them is a full and adequate reason; yet it cannot stand with equity to set any aside as no reason at all, because other reasons may be joined to it. It is wrong to suppose there is but one reason for making a law, for such supposition is generally contrary to the truth of facts; and there are really as many reasons as there are useful designs and wise ends promoted by it. Thus much to show that political reasons, especially which regarded the blessings of the promised land, were fit reasons to be considered in a ritual for the Hebrew nation dwelling in it, as the gift of Jehovah their God.

It is very evident this distinction of foods introduced customs among the Hebrews, very different from the customs of their neighbour nations, and were therefore a means of keeping them from too much familiarity and ensnaring friendship in their luxurious feasts upon their sacrifices; the ritual mentions this design as of great importance: *Ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have se-*

parated you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Thus the Hebrews killed for sacrifice and for food what were sacred animals to their neighbours; and such as were unclean to the Hebrews, were holy among the heathen, "as a swine to Venus, an "owl to Minerva, an hawk to Apollo, an "eagle to Jupiter, and a dog to Hecate, "&c." as our learned Bishop Patrick very justly observes. Whence, he adds, Origen justly falls into admiration of the wisdom of Moses, to pronounce all animals which had a relation to dæmons, and were used as instruments of divination, to be unclean, and those to be clean which were not so. How many magical uses did the idolatry of the heathen nations make of reptiles and other things, forbid by the Hebrew ritual! The Zabians had an offering supposed very acceptable to the sun, of seven bats, seven mice, and seven other reptiles. Canidia, the witch, is represented using in her enchantments the blood of toads and feathers of owls*. It is well known, animals were used from the most early times as figurative representations of qualities and tempers. This is so evident in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, it is no wonder persons of great name, ancient and mo-

Bishop Patrick on Levit. xi. 2.

Maimon. Mor. Neboc. part iii. c. 29.

* Et uncta turpis ova ranæ sanguine,
Plumamque nocturnæ strigis.
Horat. Epod. v. 19.

dern, should observe some analogy between the qualities of unclean beasts and birds, and the moral bad qualities of men's minds. Beasts and birds of prey were a sort of natural symbols of violence and rapine; creatures continually wallowing in the mire and defiling themselves, as the dog and swine, in nastiness, are natural representations of impurity, or returning to a course of wickedness. Hence it became a proverbial expression, *the dog is returned to his vomit again, and the swine that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* Though this is not an only reason, and may likely be indulged too far, for there is scarce any end of allegory, yet, I think, mildness, gentleness, cleanness, and usefulness in the foods allowed, wildness, uncleanness, violence in many of the creatures forbidden for food, do naturally and usefully represent an admonition to avoid the qualities of violence, rapine, cruelty, or moral impurity, and to esteem meekness and innocency, and to aim at usefulness in life. Such moral instruction in the ritual, which will more fully appear hereafter, shows the wisdom of it, and ought to recommend it to our esteem.

Occasional pollutions, dead bodies, &c.

The holiness of the Hebrew nation is still further taken notice of in the ritual, by declaring many things to be pollutions, some of which were accidental, and unavoidable; yet they rendered them for a

time, and, till they were purified, not fit to appear in the holy congregation, and before the presence of Jehovah. It may help to our better understanding of this part of the ritual, to consider them in this following order; first, the uncleanness of persons, and then the uncleanness of things.

I. The uncleanness of persons, which were these:

1. The uncleanness of a woman in child-birth: *If she bear a man-child,* says the ritual, *she shall be unclean seven days; but if she bear a maid-child, she shall be unclean two weeks.* Levit. xii. 3.

2. The uncleanness of a menstruous woman requires a separation for seven days; and if it continues longer than the time of her separation, all the days it shall continue, shall be as the days of her separation.

3. The uncleanness of conjugal embraces. Both the man and the woman were unclean until the even. How contrary is this part of the Hebrew ritual to the idolatrous custom of allowing the use of women in the very temples of the heathen idols! Levit. xv. 16—18.

4. The uncleanness of leprosy. Whoever upon examination were found with the marks of leprosy upon them, were to be declared unclean: *And the leper on whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent,* Levit. xiii. 45, 46.

and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone, without the camp shall his habitation be.

5. The uncleanness of funerals, or by the touch of a dead body. *He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. It was the law, when a man dieth in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.* This uncleanness was also contracted by the touch of a dead body, or the bone of a dead man, or a grave.

Numb. xix. 11. 14. 16.

6. There was also an uncleanness in sleep by nocturnal pollution: *If there be among you any man that is not clean, by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night,* he is to be accounted unclean until the even.

Deut. xxiii. 10, 11.

7. There was an uncleanness contracted by touching what was unclean. This sort of uncleanness seems the most extensive: *For whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man, of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath, the soul which hath touched any such, shall be unclean until the even.* These were the personal pollutions.

Levit. xxii. 5, 6.

To these it will be proper to add what

the ritual declared a pollution in things inanimate, such as beds, vessels, furniture, &c. Thus, *when a woman is unclean, having an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, every thing that she sitteth or lieth upon shall be unclean.* Levit. xv. 19, 20.

It seems a general intention of these laws to "maintain a reverence of the "Divine Majesty, by forbidding every "person that was polluted to come into "the sanctuary," as Bishop Patrick observes, from Maimonides. "It was made "a business of care and circumspection, "to approach, as they ought, the Divine "Presence." Dr. Spencer observes further, very justly, that "Moses in his ritual accounted those things as unclean, "which had some kind of natural impurity and foulness, in the general opinion "of mankind, or which, at least in the opinion of persons of more refined taste, "had some appearances of natural uncleanness*." Most of the things unclean by the Hebrew ritual, were esteemed so by other people, as well as by Moses. Neighbour nations could hardly have esteemed the Hebrews an holy nation, if Bishop Patrick on Levit. xv. 31.

* Moses enim ea tantum pro immundis, et immunditiæ causis haberi jussit, quæ naturalem quandam spurcitiem, et fœditatem præ se fuerunt, et quæ homines, sensûs præsertim delicatioris, naturaliter abominantur.—*Spencer's Leg. Hebr.* l. i. c. 8. § 142.

they had held nothing to be unclean. The Egyptians, and all who had any knowledge of the Egyptian doctrines, or reverence for them, would have accounted them common and profane, for making no distinction between clean and unclean.

These were constitutions which gave an honour, and procured a respect to the Hebrews, as an holy nation, from their neighbours; as well as it usefully instructed themselves, what purity and reverence, and what care to keep themselves from all uncleanness, became the worshippers of Jehovah, the Holy One.

Besides, the idolatrous nations had, by superstitious imaginations, multiplied things unclean without end. It was of good use to appoint a ritual which might correct, and put a stop to such superstitions, by giving the Hebrews, as an holy nation, directions, showing them what they should account unclean, and to declare such things only unclean, as were naturally esteemed impure, or were proper to give a sense of moral, as well as ritual impurity, and to raise reverence for the presence of Jehovah, and an abhorrence of such rites, as impure, which were like to mislead them into idolatry, and to be recommended to them as holy rites, and by which they imagined they had communion with their dæmon gods.

The worship of dæmons, or dead per-

sons, soon introduced honours to their dead bodies and their graves. The use of blood in their feasts for the dead, was soon accounted an act of communion with the dæmons themselves. How well suited to prevent these idolatries, did the Hebrew ritual represent the touch of a dead body, and every issue of blood as polluting, and rendering them unfit to appear before the presence of Jehovah, in his most holy place.

The law itself evidently shows it had a regard to such superstitions: *Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood, neither shall ye use enchantments, nor observe times. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cutting in your flesh for the dead, nor print any mark upon you. I am the Lord.* Levit. xix. 26, 27, 28. עלהם

Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood, ought to be rendered, at, or before blood, and is an allusion to the idolatrous worship of dæmons, by gathering blood together for them as supposed their food, and coming themselves and eating part of it, whereby they were esteemed the dæmons' guests, and by this kind of communion with them, were supposed enabled to prophesy and foretel things to come—to have such familiarity with these spirits, as to receive revelations, and be inspired with the knowledge of secret things. Such

divinations by the dead became a very common, but a very dangerous practice of idolatry. The funeral customs of cutting the hair of their heads round about, throwing it into the sepulchres of their relations and friends, sometimes laying it on the face or breast of the deceased, as a sacrifice to the infernal gods—making cuttings in their flesh for the dead, printing some mark on their bodies, to show to what dæmon or idol-god they belonged, were known idolatrous customs, as many learned men have shown at large, after Maimonides, and is observed by Bishop Patrick on the place. This is confirmed by the after-explications of the Prophets, in particular the Prophet Jeremiah.

Jerem. xvi. 6, 7.—xlv. 1.

What, now, appears more likely to prevent these idolatries, than to represent dead bodies and all issues of blood, even involuntary, so far from sacred rites or acceptable acts of worship, or giving communion with gods, that they polluted both persons and things that touched them, and made them unfit to appear in the presence of Jehovah their God?

Several particular laws against idolatrous customs.

It is moreover to be observed, there are prohibitions in the Mosaical ritual of certain rites and customs in use among idolaters, which abuse of them in idolatrous worship was a sufficient reason to forbid them, how indifferent, how innocent soever they might appear in themselves; for every

danger of idolatry was of too great concern to be neglected.

It will be sufficient here just to mention these laws, and the superstitions, or idolatrous customs, which seem the occasion of their prohibition. There is a law that directs, *Thou shalt not seeth a kid in his mother's milk.* As this law is among others which are manifestly designed to forbid the use of idolatrous rites, it is natural to understand it was designed to answer the same end. It has been shown at large by learned men, that the very ancient idolaters, the Zabians, had a magical rite in which the sacrifice and eating of a goat was a considerable part. Abarbinel expressly affirms, "The ancient idolaters "were wont, when they gathered the "fruits of the earth, to seeth a kid in his "mother's milk, that their gods might be "more propitious to them." It is further observed by Dr. Cudworth, from a Karaite writer, who saith, "All the trees and "fields and gardens were sprinkled with "this broth (of a kid seethed in its mo-"ther's milk) after a magical manner, to "make them more fruitful for another "year." And this the learned Bochart takes to be the truest interpretation. It may here be observed, once for all, that in such arguments, as so much depends on very ancient customs, it is unreasonable to expect a more positive proof, than the

Not to seeth a kid in his mother's milk.

Exod. xxiii. 19.

Bishop Patrick on the place.

great probability of such magical rites, agreeable to unquestionable idolatrous customs of like nature, affords, than a plain and easy reason for a law, that takes notice of them, in forbidding them and the mention of them by persons of good understanding and credit. So much seems evident, that, as the Hebrews are forbid to use this rite, they are forbid the use of it as a superstition or magical action; for no man of common sense would ever have thought of such a rite, for any other than some superstitious or magical use.

Not to offer honey.

Maimonides observes, "It was a custom among idolaters, that they offered "leavened bread, and chose sweet things "for their offerings to their gods; and "that they used to anoint them with "honey;" as appears by their writings, often quoted by him. It is further remarked by our learned Spencer, from Porphyry, "that they (who offered sacrifices to dæ-"mons) made honey a symbol of death, "and therefore they sacrificed to the ter-"restrial gods an offering of honey. It "may be taken for certain," he adds, "that the ancient idolaters sometimes of-"fered honey to the superior or heavenly "gods; but that they always offered it to "the infernal gods and dead heroes."

Maimon. Mor. Neb. part III. l. xlvi. p. 481.

Spencer's Leg. Heb. l. II. c. 9.

It became the honour of Jehovah's worship not to be defiled with rites appropriated to the worship of dead men, and

the infernal deities. And it was a manifest useful means to preserve the Hebrews from these idolatries, when they were directed by their ritual to avoid what the idolatrous customs of their neighbours made sacred and religious, and in particular to the honour of the dead, a principal part of their idolatry.

Passing through the fire to Moloch.

It is observed by Maimonides, "as one "great artifice of the idolatrous priests, to "work on the weakness of men's tempers;" which has been found in experience a very likely way to lead men into very great superstitions. "They knew they feared no- "thing so much as the loss of their for- "tunes and of their children: the wor- "shippers of fire therefore declared, that "if they did not make their sons and "daughters to pass through the fire, all "their children would die." This passing through the fire may be considered as a rite of purification, or of initiation, by which parents dedicated their children to this idol. Such purifications, or lustrations by fire, were rightly understood to be an act of consecration to the honour and worship of Moloch, the sun, or prince of the heavenly host. This idolatrous rite, if it was not so originally, in time grew into a most barbarous and cruel superstition: they did not only cause the children to pass through the fire to purify them, but they were actually burned, as an offering

Maimon. Mor. Neb. part III. c. 37.

to this idol. The wisdom of a law to prevent so very dangerous an act of idolatry, is evident to all. It shows what important reasons there were for the law. *Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Moloch, neither shalt thou profane the name of the Lord thy God: I am the Lord.*

Levit. xviii. 21.

To purify children by causing them to pass through the fire to Moloch, would have been idolatry; but actually to burn innocent children to his honour, was horrid and abominable, as well as idolatrous.

The prohibition of eating blood.

"It was a well-known doctrine of the "ancient idolaters, that blood was a food "for dæmons; it was therefore a cus- "tomary rite of idolatry, when they kill- "ed a beast, to receive the blood into "some vessel, or pour it into some hole "or trench made in the ground, and set- "ting themselves round about it to eat the "flesh, supposing that they eating the "flesh, while the dæmons drank the "blood, they were the dæmons' guests, "and by this kind of communion with "them were enabled to prophesy and to "foretel things to come." Therefore there is a law, *Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood*; or, as learned men have observed, the truer interpretation, *at the blood*, or *before the blood*, as the manner was when the blood was thus offered to dæmons.

Maimon. Mor. Neb. part III. 1. xlvi. p. 484.

Leviticus, xix. 26.

It was another custom among idolaters, that they were used to pull, or to cut off the hair of their heads and beards, and to offer those hairs to the infernal gods, by laying them on the dead bodies, or throwing them into the sepulchres of their deceased friends. Both the custom itself, and the use of it, as an idolatrous rite, are shown at large by our learned Spencer *, in whom you may see it proved by the best authorities; and therefore he gives this the reason of a particular law; for which end (to prevent idolatrous honours to the ghosts of their departed friends) the ritual directs, *Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy bread.*

Not to round the corners of their heads.

Spencer's Leg. Heb. l. ii. c. 12. § 2.

Levit. xix. 27.

The same learned author observes, it was also an ancient custom among idolaters, to tear and wound their flesh, at the funerals of their friends, as well as to cut off the hair of their heads and beards, from an absurd imagination that such bloody rites were acceptable to the infernal deities, and of some comfort and benefit to their deceased friends †. It was a known cus-

* Gentibus antiquioribus in more erat, ut amicorum defunctorum bustis, loculis, sepulchris, aut cadaveribus, adstantes, capitum et barbarum capillos vellerent, aut circumtonderent, eos loculis, aut cadaveribus, imponerent, eosque muneris aut placaminis loco, mortuis, aut diis inferis devoverent.

† Monendum est, ethnicos funeris officium exe-

tom with the priests of Baal, *to cry aloud, and to cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.*

1 Kings, xviii. 28.

It was also a custom among idolaters to make a sort of marks or characters on their bodies, by which they consecrated themselves to the particular service of some idol, and professed a peculiar covenant between them and some dæmon. They were accustomed to use some marks in honour of their deceased friends. These were a sort of magical rite, denoting some peculiar communication between them. These marks seem sometimes to be made with an hot iron, sometimes pricking a figure in the flesh with an instrument like a needle, and colouring it afterwards with some dye. It was sometimes painting on the flesh the name of some dæmon or idol, sometimes a figurative symbol of the idol, as a thunderbolt for Jupiter, a trident for Neptune, an ivy-leaf for Bacchus; sometimes a mystical name of the idol, or a number denoting the idol, though understood only by those who were initiated into the mystery. Thus the mystical name of the sun was marked X H, signify-

Spencer's Leg. Heb. l. ii. c. 14.

quentes, carnes incidere, genas ungue fœdare, quandoque membrum aliquod abscindere voluisse, quod absurde crederent, ritus illos sanguineos diis manibus acceptos, aut amicis fato functis aliquid solaminis allaturos.—*Spencer's Leg. Heb.* l. xiii.

ing the number DCVIII. These marks (like circumcision among the Hebrews) were a sort of sacraments of initiation into the service of those idols, whose names, or numbers, or marks, they received. They were constant memorials to them, of their devotion to that idol, and hope of peculiar protection and blessing from it. It was a good reason to prevent such idolatry, to direct the Hebrews by their ritual, as a peculiar people to Jehovah, *Ye shall not make any cutting in your flesh for the dead, nor print any mark upon you: I am the Lord.* Levit. xix. 28.

Among the superstitions of the Egyptians, by which the Hebrews were in great danger of being corrupted, they had a great veneration for calves, especially for females, so that it was not lawful to sacrifice females, because they were sacred to Isis. They were accustomed also to choose only red calves as an offering to Typhon; such cattle moreover, which had been used in labour, and had been yoked for the service of husbandry, were judged unfit for the service of the gods, as in some sense profaned by having been put to common use. The ritual directs the children of Israel to *bring a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke.* This heifer was not to be slain as other sacrifices at the altar, but to be carried without the camp and slain

Herodot. l. ii. c. 1. Plutarch de Iside. Spencer, 341.

Numb. xix. 2.

3.

there; yet the blood was to be sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle of the congregation; the heifer was to be burned, her skin and her flesh, and her blood with her dung. By these actions the priest was accounted unclean, he was to wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water. The design of this sin-offering is explained to this purpose: *A man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place; and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.* A little of these ashes mixed with water, and sprinkled on an unclean person, purified and cleansed him. The general reasons for appointing a purification, and why such a sin-offering should be carried out of the camp, and make the persons who were employed about it unclean, are easily to be perceived; but why it should be a young cow, and not a bullock (which were commonly appointed for sacrifice), why it should be a red heifer, is not so easy, says a learned interpreter, to understand. But supposing such a superstition in Egypt as Pharaoh and Herodotus mention, of abhorring to offer a cow, holding it unlawful to offer females, and appropriating the red colour to Typhon; it will be a wise reason and design to preserve the Israelites from such-like superstitions;

Bishop Patrick in loc.

and the testimonies of the most ancient historians, very probably alluded to in the laws of the Mosaical ritual itself, will very much confirm the supposition, that these superstitions were as ancient as the times of Moses himself.

Groves of trees were anciently chosen as proper places of religious worship, and as temples of idol gods: this gave countenance to a superstitious notion, that the gods were themselves pleased with them, as pleasant places and places of retirement, and therefore chose them as it were to dwell in, or repair very frequently to them. Hence the poet, Groves near altars.

Some god they knew, what god they could not tell,
Did there amidst the sacred horror dwell *.

DRYDEN.

However innocent the first use of groves might be, they were soon polluted with superstition as idolatry increased, and with impure rites, that, as Dr. Spencer observes, they degenerated into brothel-houses. They were considered as the retirements of dæmons, and the sepulchres of their heroes †. These confirmed them in a Spencer, Leg. Heb. l. 2. c. xvi. § 2. p. 369.

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(Quis deus incertum est) habitat deus.
Virgil. Æneid. l. viii. 351.

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belief that their souls frequented such places where they called upon the ghosts, and consulted them as oracles to reveal things to come. Here the darkness and privacy of the place encouraged the obscene rites of Venus and Priapus. There seems to be a plain allusion to this wicked abuse of groves in the Hebrew history: *For they also built them high places and images, and groves on every high hill, and every green tree; and there were also sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.*

1 Kings, xiv. 23, 24.

Whatever, then, the original of groves might be, whatever uses, civil or religious, might have been made of them innocently at the beginning, such abuse of them to superstitious, idolatrous, and wicked rites, was a very good reason for the law to the Hebrews, *Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee.* It was fit to remove far from the altar of God, things which had, and, if allowed, still might, mislead them into idolatry.

Deuter. xvi. 21.

Not to wear the habit of a different sex.

It was another idolatrous custom, as Maimonides * observes, that men should

* Invenies enim in libro שמחות præcipi, ut vir gestet vestimentum muliebre coloratum, quando stat coram stella Veneris, similiter ut mulier induat loricam, et arma bellica, quando stat coram stella Martis.—*Maim. Mor. Neb.* p. 3. c. xxxvii. p. 447.

wear flowered garments of women when they worshipped Venus, and that women should wear a coat of mail, and armour, when they worshipped Mars. Learned men have observed many more superstitious customs of like nature in the worship of Venus, among the Greeks as well as the eastern people. It became, then, the wisdom of the Hebrew ritual to discountenance a custom founded on superstition and magical principles, the marks of idolatry in the worship of false gods, and made acts of worship, as they were accounted more pleasing to them, as better suiting their particular characters; Venus being supposed the goddess of pleasure and love, and Mars the god of arms and war. The idolatrous notions of gods and goddesses of different sexes, were great corruptions of the knowledge of the true God, and gave great occasion for debauchery and impure rites, to accompany even their religious worship. There was then sufficient reason to prevent them among the Hebrews; therefore it is a law of their ritual, *the women shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all who do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.*

Spencer's Leg. Heb. l. 2. c. xvii. § 1.

Deut. xxii. 5.

Idolatry had produced many magical rites by which men hoped to obtain a blessing on the fruits of the earth, that they

Not to sow a vineyard with dif-

ferent seeds.

should be better and more plentiful, if they chose a certain time of the moon, if they used a particular form of words; and, according to Maimon, some most abominable actions were used by them, at the same time. He gives a remarkable instance on ingrafting one sort of fruit into another, of a rite so abominable that it is not fit to be translated; I shall only give his own words in the margin*.

It was a further rite taught by idolatry, that barley and dried grapes should be sowed together, supposing such a mixture made their vineyards better. By such actions, as Dr. Spencer rightly observes, they signified that their vineyards were consecrated to Ceres and Bacchus, and were recommended to their protection, and expressed, in effect, a dependence on their influence for their fruitfulness.

Spencer, l. 2. c. xviii. § 2.

Such rites as these were a sort of renunciation of the protection and blessing of the true God, and a declaration of their hope in the favour of other gods besides him, to whom they recommended themselves, rather than to Jehovah, for the fruitfulness of their vineyards; therefore the

* Scribunt etiam oportere, ut cum una species in aliam inseritur, surculum inserendum manu sua teneat formosa quædam puella, quam preternaturali quadam ratione, vir quidam vitiet et corrumpet, ipsaque congressûs hujus tempore, plantam illam arbori infigat.—*Maimon.* ib. 451.

Hebrew ritual directs, *Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with different seeds, lest the fruit of the seed thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.* Deut. xxii. 9.

The next law that follows in the ritual is this, *Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.* Several interpreters understand this law, as meaning the same thing with a law in different words, *Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with another kind.* Some have supposed this a symbolical law, to give a moral caution to the Hebrews against intermarriages with idolaters; and to this they refer the caution of the Apostle to Christians, *Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?* Not to plough with an ox and an ass together. Deut. xxii. 10. Levit. xix. 19. Le Clerk in loc. 2 Cor. vi. 14.

But our learned Bishop Patrick has observed another reason for this law: "It "seems also to have a respect to those "magical rites of the idolatrous nations in "those countries, who thought their fields "would be more fruitful, if, according to "some directions which had been given "by their gods, they were thus ploughed." One cannot well think that men, of themselves, would have joined together two creatures, so different in temper and motion, to draw in the same yoke, if they had not been led into it by some superstition or other. A similitude of like magical rites B. Patrick in loc.

in other cases, makes this a very probable conjecture. Dr. Spencer thinks also, there was a magical rite of causing cattle of divers kinds of gender, in honour of Venus and Priapus, in a certain conjunction of the planets, and according to some other ridiculous superstitions. It was therefore provided by the ritual, *Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with another kind.*

Spencer, Leg. Heb. l. 2. c. xx.

Levit. xix. 19.

We may understand another law in the same view, and perceive a sufficient reason in it for prohibiting garments of different materials, such as linen and woollen mixed together, according to the direction, *Neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.*

Not to wear garments of different materials.

Levit. xix. 19.

The ancient idolaters the Zabians professed to believe, that they owed the increase of their wool in their flocks, and of flax in their fields, to the favour and blessing of the stars, and to their lucky conjunctions; in testimony whereof, they mixed linen and woollen together in garments, and wore them in honour to the stars, and acknowledgment of their fortunate aspects. This is well expressed by Parisiensis in our Dr. Spencer*, in whom

* Idololatræ volebant insinuare per hujusmodi commixtiones, et conjunctiones, agricolas, et pastores, ad stellarum servitium obligatos, quia stellarum favore et beneficio putabant, ad lanæ copiam in animalibus, et lini in agris provenire. Propter hoc ergo lanam et linum simul in vestibus conjungebant, ut ipso habitu, hanc superstitionem profiterentur, et utramque copiam à

you may find many more authorities to the same purpose.

These are either so plain authorities, or so strong circumstantial evidences, for the several idolatrous rites to which these laws of the Hebrew ritual are opposed, and they are so good reasons why they should be prohibited in a ritual, a chief design of which was to prevent idolatry, that it must be very unreasonable to require further reasons, or not to own the wisdom of these.

Purifications.

There were, you have seen, many ways by which the Hebrews became unclean, according to their ritual. The ritual therefore provided proper lustrations to purge and purify them, that they might be clean, and so fit to appear in the presence of Jehovah.

Impurity of heart was well represented by a pollution or filthiness of the flesh; therefore washing with water, as the common method of cleansing the body from all filthiness, was a very proper emblem to represent cleansing from all filthiness of

stellis provenire, confiterenter.—*Spencer's Leg. Heb.* l. 2. c. xxi. p. 402.

It is a remarkable observation of St. Thomas, quoted in the same place, Omnes illæ commixtiones sunt prohibitæ ad literam, in detestationem idololatriæ; quia Ægyptii in venerationem stellarum, diversas commixtiones faciebant, et in seminibus, et in animalibus, et in vestibus, representantes diversas conjunctiones stellarum. —*Prim. Secund. Ques.* 102, *Art.* 6.

spirit; as clean hands are a figurative expression for a clean heart.

This use of water, a plain and significant rite, was one of the most ancient and common usages: the use of it is taken notice of in the book of Job, the most ancient writing in the world. But plain as this rite was in itself, as free from all superstition and idolatry, it was very soon corrupted; so hard it is to keep the very plainest rites from running into superstition, unless guarded with great care and wisdom. Instead of using only pure or clear water from springs, fountains, and the running waters of rivers, called living waters, in opposition to stagnating, and so usually muddy or stinking waters, called dead waters; idolatry invented a great many other things for the use of purifications, as salt, sulphur, honey, spittle, and many others, mentioned at large by the authors who have described the ceremonies of the heathen purifications, and especially by Somiere. They had several ways for the use of water, of air, and of fire; of water and fire together, and of water and blood. Sometimes they used human blood in their purifications; this was often by cutting and wounding themselves, sometimes to death. Superstition, which knows no bounds, went on continually inventing new rites of purification; so that hogs, cats, dogs, and lions, were used by some of the wisest nations for lustrations.

Somiere de Lustrationibus veterum Gentilium, l. xvii. &c.

c. xx.

c. xxii.

Ibid. l. xxiii.

The use of these purifications became at last so common, that they were used for almost all things, for fields and houses, as well as for men; for the dead, as well as for the living: in fine, they were imagined to be of use after death, and that the soul was to be purified, when in the state of the dead. This, likely, gave occasion for the popish doctrine of purgatory. It was certainly the parent of many superstitions among the heathen nations, which well deserved the wisdom of a law to prevent. The Roman poet, so knowing in the rites of his own religion, has given us this description of it: Ibid. l. xxix.

Nor death itself can wholly wash these stains,
But long-contracted filth e'en in the soul remains;
The reliques of inveterate vice they wear,
And spots of sin obscene in every face appear:
For this are various penances enjoin'd,
And some are hung to bleach upon the wind,
Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires.
Dryden, Æn. vi. 1000*.

The poet here alludes to the principal rites of purification by water, wind, and fire,

* Quin & supremo cum lumine vita reliquit,
Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus omnes
Corporeæ excedunt pestes: penitusque necesse est
Multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris.
Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expendunt. Aliæ panduntur inanis
Suspensæ ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.
Virg. Æn. l. vi. v. 735.

so well known, and so common in the heathen worship.

The ritual of the Hebrew church does not condemn the use of all purifications; it receives a rite, ancient, of easy and instructive meaning, and free from all appearance of superstition. As, for many good reasons, this institution was to be a ritual, but such a ritual as should put a stop to growing superstition, so it appoints pure water to be used for all purifications, except one extraordinary, before mentioned, when the ashes of the red heifer were to be mingled with water; the reason of which sacrifice, and the peculiar ceremonies of it, are already explained.

Lev. xv. 13. The ritual, in directing these purifications by water, mentions running water, מים חיים in the original living water, as the cleanest water, and for that reason fit to be preferred to standing waters, which were usually neither clean, nor sweet, in hot countries.

Numb. xix. 11. The extraordinary purification, by the mixture of the ashes of the red heifer with water, was appointed to cleanse such as were defiled by the touch of the dead body of a man, to teach more effectually, that any supposed commerce or communication with the dead, or any rites expressing it, instead of purifying them, as superstition taught, would very greatly pollute them, as contrary to the faith and worship

of a people consecrated to the service of Jehovah, as the only true God. It may appear how fit it was to set this hedge to keep out superstition, by observing how prone the more zealous of the Hebrews themselves were, to bring in new purifications, and make void the commandments of God in the ritual, by introducing their own inventions, in the name of traditions, for which our Saviour so very justly condemns the Pharisees, when he said unto them, *Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.* Mark, vii. 9.

This ritual of purification, as God commanded it, was a frequent repetition, in an easy figurative meaning, of that excellent exhortation of the Apostle, *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* 2 Cor. vii. 1. Thus they appeared an holy nation, consecrated to the service of the Holy One of Israel.

Privileges by the Hebrew ritual.

Finally, in this ritual of the Hebrew church we are to consider the privileges declared by it, which they were favoured with, as the holy seed of Abraham, and a peculiar people to Jehovah, above all nations of the earth. These privileges were declared by the ritual, in allowing a near approach to the Shechinah, and in the blessings promised thereupon by Jehovah.

The Presence, or Shechinah, was so im-

portant a part of the Hebrew ritual, that all the other parts of that ritual refer to it, and centre in it. This Presence made holy the land, the city, and the temple. Hence the land of promise they inherited, and held as the gift of God, was styled the holy land; the city of Jerusalem was the holy city, as the camp, or congregation, were the holy congregation; the mountain on which the temple was built, was the holy hill of Zion; the temple itself the holy place; and the residence of the Shechinah, between the cherubim, the most holy place. This taught them, with great reason, to say, *What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for?*

Deut. iv. 7.

The nature of the peculiar privileges intimated by the presence of Jehovah in the Shechinah, is well explained by Moses himself, just upon his publishing the law: *Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself,* says he to the people, in the name of Jehovah; *now therefore,* he further adds, in the name of God, *if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.* This great privilege and blessing, from

Exodus, xix. 4, 5, 6.

the presence of Jehovah with them as his peculium, is explained, *to make them high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.* Deut. xxvi. 19.

These great privileges were expressed in the ritual, chiefly in two things, the first in allowing a near approach to the Shechinah, the other the blessing from the Shechinah.

The first of these blessings appeared in the ritual allowing all the Hebrews who were ritually clean, to approach the Presence, but expressly forbidding any of the heathen nations, or any who was not an Israelite, to come into the temple, the holy seat of the Presence. In this respect, the ritual considered all but the Hebrew nation cut off from this privilege, as persons unfit to have access to this gracious presence of God, on his mercy-seat. The same ritual represents it as a great punishment to to be cut off from the presence of God, and a very criminal action for an unclean person, by his presence at the sanctuary, to defile it. But every Hebrew who was not unclean, had the liberty of entering into the congregation, and with it all the rights of the congregation of the Lord, and had, with every other Israelite, a personal interest in all the worship of the temple: one instance, in particular, may serve to Numb. xix. 20.

explain it. In the ritual for the service of the day of expiation, the high priest is thus
Levit. xvi. 21. directed; *And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat.* So that all the children of Israel had this privilege, that an atonement was made for all their sins once a
34. year. The Presence itself over the mercy-seat, gave encouragement to hope God would hear, and answer, the prayers of those who were privileged to approach it; or, as Solomon expresses it at the dedica-
1 Kings, viii. 29, 30. tion of the temple, *That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place; and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest forgive.* Thus the ritual encou-
—51, 52. raged them to hope, *that his eye would be open unto the supplication of his people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto him; for they be thy people,*
53. *and thine inheritance,* says Solomon. *For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses*

thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

It was another part of the high privileges of the Hebrews, as God's peculiar people, that the ritual appointed a solemn blessing for them, in the name of Jehovah. *On this wise,* says the ritual, *ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.* Numb. vi. 23 to 27.

The form of this blessing, without examining the critical meaning of each expression, plainly intends all those blessings the Hebrews had reason to hope for from Jehovah, their God and King, according to his promises and covenant with them, as his most favoured and peculiar people.

There is one promise of this covenant with the holy seed of Abraham, which deserves particular attention: *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering together of the people be.* Gen. xlix. 10. If this promise is to be understood of the Messiah, as, I think, it has been sufficiently proved it does, it promises the holy seed of Abraham the blessing of Jehovah, in the continuance of their civil and religious laws; a blessing that includes

temporals and spirituals, their religion, and their liberty, till that seed of Abraham should appear, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

It may here deserve one remark on this ritual of the Hebrew worship, now set before us, that, with a very great variety of rites and ceremonies, there appears a very great uniformity of design; so that all are subservient to one principal rite, the Shechinah, or ritual presence of Jehovah in the temple. The excellent uses designed by this rite, the excellent ends that were answered by it, show all the ritual constitutions, as severally referred to it, in all their use and beauty, as we shall presently see more plainly and fully.

The Shechinah then appears to be appointed a kebla and an oracle, or that all the solemn worship of the whole church was to be directed to that place where Jehovah dwelt, by his Shechinah; and it was therefore declared unlawful by this ritual, to have any altar, or to offer any sacrifice, but before this Presence. In honour to this Presence, and to reverence the Shechinah, the ritual appoints the magnificence of the temple, of the holy, and most holy place, and the religious respect with which they were to be approached; for the same end, the ritual appoints so many servants to attend on the Presence, and to minister before the Lord Jehovah; who were to be

invested in their holy office by many solemn rites of consecration. This honour, which ought to distinguish Jehovah, as above all gods, in the perfections of his nature and supreme authority, is further well expressed by the whole ceremonial of the sacrificial rites. Whether we consider the things that were to be offered, or the persons who were to offer them; the several kinds of sacrifices, whole burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin and trespass offerings, which were to honour God, as the supreme governor of the world, as forgiving iniquities, transgressions, and sins; as the author of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; these are plainly designed to give unto Jehovah, as their God, this glory that is due to his name. Thus all the ritual holiness is manifestly designed for the same end, that they might be an holy people, as their God was an holy God. Hence the ritual uncleanness of foods, and several pollutions, the ritual purifications after legal uncleanness, expressed a due honour to the presence of Jehovah, constantly representing how fit, how becoming it was, for those who were honoured themselves with the nearest approach to the Presence, to keep themselves pure, purged from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that they might honourably serve so pure and so holy a God.

This is then evidently an uniform and general intention of the whole ritual, taken

together, whatever may be the more immediate intention of any particular rite. This general argument, from one uniform and useful design of the whole, may well be received as a general rational for the whole, and show a great wisdom, fitness, and propriety in it, as will more fully appear, when we shall consider the important use of this reverence for the Shechinah.

But the Shechinah is to be considered further as the oracle or word of Jehovah, by which he published his laws to the Hebrew church, and gave them his sanction. By this he gave forth his royal command and final judgment, as supreme magistrate, to whom lay an appeal in the last resort: by this he gave his directions in cases of greater moment, when consulted by Urim and Thummim. This was an honour given unto Jehovah, as their Lawgiver and King, besides the more proper religious honour ascribed to him, as their God, and only object of their worship.

To conclude this remark on the Hebrew ritual in general, this gives a very good reason, why the whole law given by the oracle, was to be received with such awful respect. So that the whole Hebrew people, whether as a church or a state, had no authority to make any alteration in it. The authority of the oracle made all the laws of this kingdom of Jehovah sacred and unchangeable: so the law itself di-

rects: *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you; neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you.* Deut iv. 2.

Besides the great advantage of putting an effectual stop to men's inventions, which were like, if permitted, to bring in endless superstition, it was moreover an honourable distinguishing respect to the commands of Jehovah, their King and their God, that no imaginations of men, no pretended oracles of other gods, should be allowed to add to, or diminish from the laws that were published by the voice of the oracle, from the Presence.

Thus every part of the ritual unites in the same wise design of its institution; but the more distinct perception of the wisdom and usefulness of this ritual, to answer these good designs of it, will require a more particular examination; to which therefore let us now proceed, being better prepared for it, having the whole ritual before us.

PART III.

How the Mosaical Ritual answered the Ends designed by it, to promote true Religion, to prevent Idolatry, to keep up the Hope of the Promise of the Messiah, and a better State of Religion under him.

WE have seen, in opening the design and general reasons of this ritual, that it was intended to promote the essentials of religion, the honour of God, the perfection and happiness of men in real virtue and goodness; that it was a further wise and useful design to preserve the Hebrews from the great danger of idolatry, every where prevailing among their neighbours, and to which they were themselves very much inclined, and to keep in memory the promise of the Messiah made to their fathers, and to themselves as the holy seed of Abraham, in whose appearance their nation, and all the nations of the earth, should be blessed.

Such designs appear really worthy the wisdom of God, a great privilege of the family of Abraham, deserving the esteem of all who will carefully examine them by their true reasons: not that this ritual is to be considered as the most perfect institution, for it was to give way to a better;

not that every part of it was of equal importance; but the whole appears rational and wise from many considerations, all uniting to promote the general designs in whole or in part.

It is a great weakness, and will likely greatly mislead us, to look for the reason of every rite in one design only; whether as types or figurative representations of a better constitution, or only as a fence against the prevailing corruption of idolatry, or only as moral instructions of wisdom and virtue, in the right knowledge of the true God, in the best, the most acceptable service of God in true righteousness and holiness. These are all of them wise designs in themselves, and are all plainly intended in the ritual; yet they are neither of them singly designed as the only reason. Some of these rites may appear, then, to promote one of these designs, suppose to preserve those who worshipped God according to this ritual from superstitious and idolatrous customs: so far as they answer this good end, they have a very good reason why they were appointed. Other rites may teach the truest notions of God's perfections, government, providence, and grace, and exhort to true virtue and goodness, to the fear and love of God, and to aim at the highest perfection of soul in a likeness to God and conformity to his holiness and perfection. The more of

these useful designs any parts of this ritual shall be found to answer, and that with more easy and evident instruction, the more we shall perceive of the reasons of their institution: and let us remark as we proceed, if any rite shall appear to answer any one of these useful purposes, so far as it shall do so, it has a very good reason to justify the appointment and use of it, though not the very same reason as other rites may be chosen for.

Let us proceed, then, to examine the Hebrew ritual, as before delineated, by these ends, which will open the reasons of them, and will fully justify them to impartial examination.

CHAP. I.

The Mosaical Ritual considered with respect to the first End, to promote the Essentials of true Religion.

First, then, let it be observed wherein this ritual gives a wise and useful instruction, as to the essentials of true religion, both in principles and practice. In this inquiry I hope you will find, what I am well persuaded is to be found with a little careful attention, an excellent instruction in the most important doctrines of true religion, such as are taught by the best light of na-

tural reason, recommended and enforced by the further light and authority of revelation, in which are taught the worthiest notions of God, the truest reasons for the worship of God, the best manner in which God is to be served and honoured, the true nature of sobriety and purity, of righteousness and goodness, of piety and godliness, the sum of virtue and of happiness. So far is this ritual from being what some have misrepresented it to be, through great ignorance or malice, an useless superstition, making religion to consist in show and ceremonies, in washings and purifications, in offerings of birds and beasts, rather than in a true knowledge of God, and an improvement in real virtue and goodness, without which there is no worship honourable to God, or profitable to ourselves.

Let us then cast our eyes a little more attentively on the plan of this ritual, and observe the particular intention of each part, and the general design of the whole, and we may easily perceive nothing can be more unjust than such a reflection on the Mosaical rites of worship: such reflections are really not true in any one instance, and are most evidently false with respect to the general and main design of the whole.

This will be made evident by observing the excellent moral instructions this ritual gives, both with respect to the principles and practices of true religion, and in

so plain, obvious, and easy meaning of the rites themselves, and the manifest intention of their use, that it must be with some difficulty men can mistake them. It is easy, I know, by the help of a strong imagination, to find many meanings in rituals, such as never had a being any where but in the fancies of a weak head. Indulging imagination too far, often obscures the true meaning, and prejudices the mind against receiving the moral instruction of a rite, which, they say, is so uncertain, so doubtful, and, for that reason, so useless.

But let us see how this case is in fact. No man can, I think, well deny, that it is possible for a rite to have a moral meaning; that the moral meaning of a rite may appear sufficiently plain and evident: circumcision of the flesh may, for instance, signify circumcision of the heart; washing with water from the filth of the body, may mean cleansing ourselves from all spiritual defilement, or all filthiness of spirit. None can with any pretence of reason say that rites and ritual actions cannot convey moral instruction, or that such instruction cannot be plain and certain enough, so that nothing but inattention, or an over-heated imagination or wilfulness, can mistake it. Let us see, then, how the Hebrew ritual instructed those who were inclined to learn wisdom from it; there is no need, I think, to take notice of such persons who seem

resolved not to learn wisdom from any instructions whatsoever.

In order, then, to perceive more clearly how the Hebrew ritual answers this design, to promote the true religion in principle and practice, it will be proper to take a short view of the essentials of religion, that so we may better compare the plan of the Hebrew ritual with it.

A noble and learned author, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, has summed up the chief and more essential parts of true religion in five articles, which teach, he observes, the sure way of honouring God, and of obtaining happiness in this life, and after it. They are these:

Herbert Rel. Gentil. 284. De Veritate, 268.

1. That there is a supreme God. 2. That the supreme God is to be worshipped. 3. That virtue is the best part of divine worship. 4. That men are to repent of their sins. 5. That there are rewards and punishments in this life, and after it *.

These our noble author mentions as necessary instructions in virtue and piety, to live well and happily here and for ever; and he plainly intimates, these so sufficiently answer the true ends of religion, that no additions can be made to them which will

* 1. Esse summum Deum. 2. Coli debere. 3. Virtutem esse precipuam partem divini cultûs. 4. Resciscendum esse à peccatis. 5. Dari premium et pœnam, in hac vita, tum post hanc vitam.

be of any real use or service to it. He therefore makes this difference between the principles of religion learned from the dictates of a right mind and true reason, and what we learn from the authority of priests, that the first men hold for doctrines of unquestionable truth, and the last only as probable opinions*. If we consider these fundamentals of Lord Herbert in this view, every one who has cast his eyes on the Hebrew ritual will find, that the whole plan and the harmony of the several parts of it, are intended to keep up the memory of these truths, and to impress them upon the minds of the Hebrew worshippers, and with greater advantage than the generality at least of an whole nation were ever like to learn them, from the dictates of right reason only, which so very few were like to attend to, and of which so very few were like to attain any good understanding, that scarce one in a thousand would ever come to know the difference between true or certain, probable or improbable, possible and impossible or false.

Before we proceed to a particular examination of the Hebrew ritual, as teaching the chief and more essential parts of

Herbert Rel. Gent. 250.

* Ut prima igitur religionis principia—ex mente, sive ratione recta, reliqua ex authoritate, sacerdotum suorum acceperant olim perspicaciores saltem gentiles, quæ priori modo statuerentur tanquam indubie vera, quæ posteriori tanquam verisimilia saltem reputantes,

religion, it will be proper to take a short view of the Hebrew creed, and see how they themselves considered the essentials of their religion. Their judicious master, Maimonides, has showed us how the Hebrew church understood the doctrines of their law: his catalogue of the principles of the Hebrew faith is given differently in different places of his writings. In one place he mentions these ten articles:

1. That we know there is a God. 2. That none conceive there is any other God besides Jehovah. 3. Concerning his unity. 4. That we love him. 5. That we fear him. 6. That we sanctify his name. 7. That we do not profane his name. 8. That we do not destroy any thing in which the name of God is. 9. That we hear a prophet speaking to us in the name of God. 10. That we do not tempt God *.

In another place the same Hebrew master mentions thirteen articles of the Hebrew creed:

1. That there is a Creator. 2. The unity of God. 3. That he is not a body. 4. His eternity. 5. That he is to be wor-

* 1. Ut sciamus istic esse Deum. 2. Ne quis concipiat alium Deum præter Jehovah. 3. De unitate ejus. 4. Ut diligamus eum. 5. Ut timeamus eum. 6. Ut sanctificemus nomen ejus. 7. Ne prophanemus nomen ejus. 8. Ne destruamus res super quas nomen Dei invocatum est. 9. Ut audiamus prophetam loquentem Dei nomine. 10. Ne tentemus eum.—*Maimon. de Fundament. Legis.*

shipped. 6. Prophecy. 7. The prophecy of Moses, that he is the greatest of prophets. 8. That the law was given from heaven. 9. That the law of Moses shall not be abrogated. 10. That God observes men's actions, and does not overlook them. 11. That God will reward those who keep the commandments of the law, and punish those who transgress them; that the greatest reward is the world to come, and the greatest cutting off of the soul. 12. The day of the Messiah. 13. Resurrection of the dead*.

It is observable how well Maimonides and Lord Herbert agree in the chief and more essential articles of true religion: Maimonides' Hebrew creed teaches a God; that God is to be worshipped; that to love God, to fear and reverence him, that to sanctify the name of God, and to keep his commandments (which teach and exhort true virtue and goodness), is the acceptable worship of God; that there will be re-

* 1. Esse Creatorem. 2. Unitas Dei. 3. Amotio corporeitatis à Deo. 4. Æternitas. 5. Illum esse qui colendus sit. 6. Prophetia. 7. Prophetia Mosis doctoris nostri, scil. omnium prophetarum patrem esse. 8. Lex è Cœlo. 9. Non abrogari legem istam Mosis. 10. Deum nôsse hominum facta neque illa neglectui habere. 11. Deum remuneraturum illos, qui præstiterint mandata legis, et pœnas iis, qui vetita patraverint inflicturum, maximum autem esse præmium mundum futurum, et maximam pœnam excidium. 12. Dies Messiæ. 13. Resurrectio mortuorum.

wards and punishments in another world, as well as this, and the greatest punishment is cutting off, which he understands of a punishment of the soul after death. This creed of the Hebrew church, you see, takes in all things which Lord Herbert makes essential to true religion, either to the honourable worship of God, or to the perfection and happiness of the worshipper: it adds, indeed, to it what is very material, doctrines which arise from revelation and prophecy, the great blessing of the Hebrew church, especially in the promises of the Messiah, and giving them the law by Moses.

It will not, however, be sufficient to the argument before us, to have observed in general, that the Mosaical law answers well the principal ends of a religious institution; it will be proper to observe more distinctly how this ritual was fitted to teach the more important truths, and to teach them in a very advantageous manner, and was therefore a much more useful way of instruction, than to be left only to the teaching of right reason, from the common attention of men's minds to it, which was found in experience unable to preserve against the powerful corruptions of superstition and idolatry. It will appear, I believe, a very considerable advantage to have a ritual in aid of the principal truths of religion, instead of an allowance of such rites and ceremonies as would greatly obscure

them, and in time quite efface them. This was in fact the case of the heathen world, notwithstanding Lord Herbert has had an opportunity from a very few of the wiser men among them to collect his five articles of religion, as received and held by them from the light of reason, and dictates of natural conscience. Let us then more distinctly consider what truths of religion this ritual of Moses teaches, and then with what advantage it taught these truths to the Hebrew church: these are questions of great importance to the argument before us.

Existence of God.

First, then, let it be observed, that this ritual in the whole, and every part, teaches the existence of God. The presence or glory of Jehovah in the most holy place; the temple built for the place of the Presence; the priests who were solemnly appointed and consecrated to wait on the Presence; all the offerings and sacrifices of every nature and kind, which were directed by the ritual to be offered on Jehovah's altar, and before his presence; the whole church of Israel appearing before the Presence on the appointed feasts, as well as the monthly, weekly, and daily worship; the cleanness and purity, the reverence and devotion with which all who approached the presence of the God of Israel were to appear before it—are so many plain, evident instructions that there is a God. This great truth the ritual constantly taught and kept in memory, in

opposition to all principles of atheism, of what nature or kind soever, either vulgar or philosophical. This ritual, therefore, plainly and fully teaches this first foundation of true religion, that there is a God: nor does it only teach there is a God, without teaching what God is; it does not leave it a word without a meaning, or of so low meaning as to instruct men very little either in the nature or obligations of virtue, or encourage and excite them to the practice of it, when with such notions of God, as many of the philosophers espoused, all virtue founded on the fear or love of God became ridiculous to mention. If all things were made at first by a necessary chain of causes and effects, without any design or wisdom of direction; if all things were left to unguided chance, without any intelligent principle to order them; if you suppose gods, who have no concern in human affairs, who only enjoy themselves in ease, without any regard to men, or any thing that concerns them—it is easy to see how naturally such principles will lead men into irreligion, and destroy all virtue on religious principles. This such philosophers both perceived and gloried in*, when the Hebrew ritual gives a much better principle of virtue, shows an obligation to vir-

* Quare religio pedibus subjecta, vicissim
Obteritur, nos exequat victoria Cœlo.
Lucretius, l. 1. 79.

tue, from the fear and love of God, and a care to do what is right in his sight. This ritual first teaches, that there is a God, and then shows what this God is, in his nature and perfections, in his government and providence, over all ranks of beings, and throughout the whole extent of beings; so that this ritual teaches the highest reason, the highest obligation, and the highest interest to fear, to love, to honour, and to serve God, by doing what is right, by avoiding what is evil in his sight, the most perfect rule and obligation of virtue. Now, the Hebrew ritual does not only instruct in the existence of a God, but also teaches the manner of his existence; that he is an eternal, a self-existent or necessary Being, who derives not his own being from any other, but from whom all other beings, of what nature, power, or order, derive theirs. So Maimon justly explains this article. This is the foundation of fundamentals, and pillar of wisdom, to know there is a first Being, and that he gives existence to every being; for all beings in heaven and earth, and which are in them, do not exist, but in the truth of his existence*.

* Fundamentum fundamentorum, et columna sapientiæ est, cognoscere esse istic primum Ens, istudque existentiam largiri cuilibet existenti, omnia enim entia cœli ac terræ quæque intra illa sunt, non existere nisi ex veritate illius existentiæ.—*Maimon. Fundament. Legis*, c. 1.

If there was not a necessary or self-existent Being, there could not possibly be any existence at all; this is therefore well considered as a first and chief article of the Hebrew creed. The same author therefore justly explains this article to this meaning. The first foundation is, that there is a Creator (to whom be praise), or who has his being in the most perfect manner, who is the cause of all other beings, and by whom their beings are supported and are continued*.

This great article concerning the being and nature of God, was taught in the most solemn parts of the Hebrew ritual. The name of Jehovah, the God they worshipped, the character of Jehovah, their God, manifestly taught his necessary existence, and that he gave being to every creature; who made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein. The God they worshipped was known by his name, *I am that I am*, and Jehovah, which denote both his existence and his necessary existence, as Maimon justly observes†; and

* Fundamentum primum est, esse Creatorem, (cui laus,) scil. esse qui sit, perfectissimo essendi modo, quique sit causa, quod sint ea, quæ sunt omnia, quoque sustineatur essentia ipsorum, et à quo durationem habeant.—*Maimon. Porta Mosis*, 164, 165.

† Quare explicatio et expositio illius Ehjch asher Ehjch, est, Hannimza asher hu Hannimza, existens qui est existens, h. e. qui necessariò existit.—*Mor. Neboc. Pt.* 1. c. lxiii.

adds, that without all question that glorious name (whose letters are *Jod, He, Vau, He,* or the name of Jehovah) signifies a being of necessary existence*.

The ritual itself, then, directed the whole worship of the Hebrew church to Jehovah, as their God. A plain authoritative explication of their ritual taught Jehovah an eternal self-existent Being, the Creator of all things. Thus they were taught to believe concerning God, their God, in whose presence they worshipped, and in whose name they were blest. Their ritual thus exalted the object of their worship, teaching Jehovah the first of all beings, himself uncreated, and the Creator of all things; so that all other beings were inferior and subject to him, entirely as his creatures dependent upon him; the heavens, and all the hosts of heaven, as well as the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, are the works of his hands, as the Hebrew doctrines explain the Hebrew ritual.

Unity of God.

Another great doctrine of true religion, taught by the Hebrew ritual, was the unity of God, or that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the only true God, and that besides him there is no other. It is most evident in fact, that there was but one Pre-

* Ac nullum est dubium, quin gloriosum istud nomen (cujus litteræ sunt *Jod, He, Vau, He,*)—significat aliquid, quod necessariam habet existentiam.—c. xli.

sence, but one most holy place, the seat of that Presence; but one altar, at which all the priests were to minister, all sacrifices were to be offered; and one only temple, consecrated to one Jehovah, the Creator of all things, of what power or dignity soever they were conceived to be. It is evident this is an instruction in every part of this ritual, and that it was designed to be taught in the whole plan of the ritual, and in the several services directed by it; so that the whole worship of the Hebrew church was contrived to be a perpetual memorial of the principal law of the ten commands, "I am the Lord thy God—Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Or (according to another solemn exhortation), "Hear, therefore, Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." In the original, Jehovah, our Elohim, is one Jehovah. The unity of God is, next to the being of God, the most important article of true faith in God; therefore the Hebrew ritual most wisely and usefully fixes it on the memory and conscience of every worshipper, that as Jehovah was their God, so they were to have no other Jehovah God, or object of worship besides him. In this the Hebrew ritual taught a much better

Exodus, xx. 2, 3.

Deut. vi. 3, 4.

creed than Lord Herbert could compile from the doctrines received from the wisest men among the heathen nations; for though the unity of God is deducible from principles of right reason, as well as the being of a God, and both of them seem truths capable of demonstration; yet, in fact, the world lost this knowledge of God, and the loss of it was the cause of all that idolatry and superstition which overspread the world, and so universally corrupted the worship of it in almost every rite and ceremony in common use; for, however some might retain the knowledge of one Supreme Being, whom they might dignify with the honourable title of the Father of Gods and Men, yet how did their worship show, in fact, that they worshipped other gods besides the Supreme, without number, beyond all bounds, either as to the gods they worshipped, or to the idolatrous and wicked rites with which they worshipped them; so little did the knowledge of the being or unity of God (such as the heathen world retained) influence to the honour, the worship, or the service of him, as the only true God.

Providence of God, general and particular.

Another important doctrine of true religion, of great influence on virtuous obedience, is the acknowledgment of a divine Providence. To suppose the being of a God, or of many gods, will be of no real use to promote true virtue and religion, if

this God, or these supposed gods, shall be also supposed to enjoy themselves in idleness and ease without any care of us, or concern in our affairs, from whom we have no good to hope, and no evil to fear, whatever our conduct or behaviour shall be. Such principles, especially when maintained as truths of philosophical wisdom, were fully as dangerous to virtue and religion as atheism itself; for what concern can men have with gods who have no concern with them?

If we were to believe, with Lucretius *, the nature of God to be such, that, wanting nothing of us, and fully happy in himself, he neither shows favour nor displeasure, neither rewards nor punishes, we should very likely conclude with his disciples, it would be a vain and unprofitable care to please a Being from whom we have nothing to hope, and nothing to fear; all virtue and religion will be left without any foundation of reverence for God, without any encouragement in expectation of any blessing from God. If we should suppose, with the vulgar theology of many gods, that the acts of particular providence to nations, cities, families, persons, that the fruits of the earth, the temperature of the

* Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene pro meritis capitur, nec tangitur ita.
Lucretius, l. 1. v. 61.

air, health, sickness, and all kinds of fortune and misfortune, were in the disposal of several dæmons, or spirits of limited powers, of different humours, of contrary dispositions, partial in their favours and enmities; what encouragement could such notions of a Providence be to true virtue and goodness *? Could any one almost imagine, that true virtue was the best way of recommending themselves to the favour of Juno or Venus, of Mars or Apollo, or even of Jupiter himself, who, though styled the father of the gods, and king of men, is yet represented as acting as unreasonably, as partially, as much after humour, passion, and lust, as the worst of men? In fact, the very rites of worship, though very agreeable to the characters of the deities worshipped, were much more likely to extinguish all just sentiments of virtue, when they were themselves so absurd and vicious.

How much more usefully does the Hebrew ritual represent Jehovah the object of their worship, the supreme Lord and Governor, as the sole Creator of all

* Quidve dolens regina deûm, tot volvere casus
Insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores
Impulerit, tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?
Virg. Æn. l. 1. v. 9.
Necdum etiam causæ irarum, sevique dolores
Exciderant animo: manet alta mente repostum
Judicium Paridis, spretæque injuria formæ:
Et genus invisum, et rapti Ganymedis honores.
V. 25.

things, not like one of the idle deities of Epicurus, or abandoning his world to the partial affections and passions of inferior spirits or dæmon gods, but himself ordering and governing all his creatures, that is, by his own care, wisdom, goodness, and power!

General providence taught by the ritual.

The Hebrew ritual therefore was so planned as to teach this doctrine of general providence, that Jehovah, by his immediate care and power, preserved the natural order of the whole universe: the course of the heavenly bodies, the seasons of the year, the natural powers of the air and earth, and whatever was necessary to the general order of Providence was the continued act of Jehovah, as supreme Lord of the universe.

The presence of Jehovah by the Shechinah in their temple, according to their ritual, seems indeed to set more immediately before them God's particular care of the Hebrew nation as a peculiar people; but the ritual represented this presence as the presence of Jehovah, of the most high God, whose throne is in the heavens, of which the throne in the temple was but a figure; and therefore it is taught by the ritual, and in the prayers of the church a very solemn part of it, that Jehovah heard in heaven his dwelling-place, the prayers that were made unto him before his presence in the temple. Though the ritual

taught that Jehovah was so present with his people Israel, as he was not with any other people; yet it never taught the presence of Jehovah was confined to the temple; or that, as some have very unfairly represented it, that the God of Israel was a local circumscribed Deity. The ritual taught all the Hebrew worshippers that he was the King of heaven, as well as King of Israel, as dwelling between the cherubim, emblems of the highest order of beings, the heavenly spirits, who do his will in the heavens as well as on earth. The Psalmist well expresses this truth:

Psalm ciii. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

20. *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearken unto the voice of his word.* Jehovah himself thus declares himself, concerning his general providence:

Isaiah, xlv. 18. *For thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth, and made it.* And the Psalmist from hence concludes the universal dominion of Jehovah:

Psalm cxxxv. 5, 6. *For I know that the Lord is great, and our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places.* Thus the sun and moon, and all the host of heaven, the earth, with all its inhabitants and produce, the provision for every creature, are under the direction

of this universal Providence, as it is elegantly described in the 104th Psalm. You will perceive further, that the several parts of worship directed by the ritual, taught this doctrine of Providence, as well as the Shechinah or Presence.

The daily sacrifices or lambs that were to be offered morning and evening as whole burned offerings, were to be considered as other burnt-offerings, viz. offered unto Jehovah, as Creator, Lord, and Governor of the whole world. The whole burnt-offerings were therefore distinguished from sin-offerings, peace-offerings, and offerings of thanksgiving, in this, that they were considered as offered unto God more directly, as the supreme God, the Creator and Governor of all beings: so that they were offered to the praise of God in acknowledgment of him as sovereign and director of universal providence, or to celebrate the praises of God, as the author of being to all creatures, and of good to every being throughout the whole creation, as a learned author has very justly observed.

Numb. xxviii. 3.

Outram de Sacrif. l. x. § 2, 3, &c.

The other burnt-offerings which were appointed for the Sabbaths, or every week for the new moons, or every month, the burnt-offerings appointed for the feast of trumpets, or first day of every new year, very properly bring to memory the uni-

—l. xii. § 4.

versal power of God's providence over all seasons as well as all beings. The weekly Sabbaths are expressly designed to renew the memory of the creation. The burnt-offerings peculiar to that day were in honour of that Jehovah who in six days made the heavens and the earth, and all
Gen. i. that is in them. The burnt-offerings appointed for the new moons and new years, were not in honour of the sun or the moon, but to the honour of Jehovah, who placed them in the firmament, guided their courses, and directed their influences. These daily, weekly, monthly, annual services, which the ritual directed, were a constant instruction in the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in the creation of the world, in the orderly course of the heavenly bodies; in particular, of all the good influences of the sun and moon, the glorious lights of heaven, and all their uses in distinguishing times and seasons, in making the earth fruitful, and in blessing men with all the variety of its increase: for in all these effects these glorious luminaries are but instruments in the hands of Jehovah, in his administration of a general providence in continuing and preserving the regular course he had appointed them at their creation. And this is what is commonly meant by the established course of nature, or, which is the same thing, in

Lord Herbert's definition, as general or universal providence*.

It is as clear and evident that this Hebrew ritual was designed to keep in remembrance the doctrine of a particular providence. By this was meant some particular favour in the dispensation of Providence to the Hebrew people, for their prosperity and happiness, and in bestowing peculiar blessings on them in their families and persons. Particular providence.

The whole ritual encouraged every Hebrew to ask such blessings from Jehovah as their God. This part of providence has been justly distinguished by the noble Author just mentioned by the name of grace or favour †.

Now it appears throughout the whole plan of the ritual, that the Hebrews had hopes in Jehovah as their God, for such acts of grace and favour; that it was a great design of the ritual to teach and encourage such hopes; that they were to trust in Jehovah for such blessings, now he caused his name to dwell among them, and chose to fix his temple as his sanctuary and his habitation among them. The particular presence was an expression of particular favour and grace; in one part

* Natura, hæc est providentia divina universalis.—*Herbert de Veritate.*

† Gratia, providentia divina particularis.—*Herbert de Veritate.*

of the ritual the priests are therefore directed in particular to put the name of Jehovah on the people of Israel, and to bless them in his name. So the ritual directs: Numb. vi. 23, &c. *In this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel,* says Jehovah, *and I will bless them.* Moses himself explains what these blessings were; in particular, Deut. xxviii. *that Jehovah their God will set them on high, above all nations of the earth.* They shall be blessed in the city, in the field, in the fruit of their body, the fruit of their ground, of their cattle, the increase of their kine, and flocks of sheep. In a word, Moses explains these blessings, of all manner of providential blessings, of such blessings as are unquestionably acts of peculiar favour, and of special grace different from the universal order of nature, and the laws of general providence. It is unquestionably the intention of the law, and of the ritual, to give hope of peculiar blessings, and to keep up a fear of contrary evils from God's displeasure. It is therefore threatened, Numb. xxviii. 15, &c. *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, that all these curses shall come upon*

thee, and overtake thee. They were taught, then, to fear all the evils contrary to the blessings promised from the favour of Jehovah as their God. Their ritual daily renewed these considerations, and fixed them on their consciences. Every sacrifice and offering, sin-offerings, peace-offerings, and offerings of thanksgiving, were constant evidences of this truth, and encouragements to this hope. They were either in order to be restored to this hope, if they had lost it by any transgression of the law, as sin-offerings, or to obtain some blessing from the favour of God, as the peace-offerings, or to acknowledge this favour and grace of God in some or other of these blessings received from him, as the offerings of thanksgiving. The ritual directing so many sorts of festivals, daily, weekly, monthly, annually, taught the same truth as acknowledgments of God's special favour to them, as the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whose therefore were the promises which Jehovah had faithfully made good to them, in giving the promised land; continuing to them the possession of it; giving them plenty, peace, and prosperity in it.

This constant admonition, that universal and particular providence were in the hands of Jehovah, the only true God, and administered by him as their God, made the articles of the existence and unity of

God of the highest personal importance, forasmuch as their prosperity and happiness, or their calamities and misery, must depend on the favour or displeasure of Jehovah, the one only true God.

Jehovah an holy and merciful God.

Another doctrine of most useful instruction, which this ritual taught the Hebrew church, was this: that Jehovah, the object of their religious worship, was the *Holy One of Israel;* yet it teaches at the same time, he was the *Lord God, gracious and merciful.* Thus, as they were to believe that Jehovah was God, and besides him there was no other, and that therefore the general order of nature, and all acts of particular grace and favour, proceeded from him, they were also taught to believe, that though God did all things after his own will and good pleasure, yet it was in a manner becoming himself, and his governing perfections, that is, as an holy God, and as a God plenteous in mercy. Thus their ritual instructed them in the moral perfections of the God they worshipped; it taught them how both these perfections of God were consistent with each other, how they were to expect the use of each in the administration of Providence, in acts of favour or displeasure to themselves. Jehovah therefore spake unto Moses, saying, *Speak unto all the congregation of the people of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your*

Levit. xix. 1, 2.

God am holy. If you consider the directions of the ritual to consecrate the temple, to hallow the sanctuary, that there might be a most holy place for the presence of Jehovah, whose name is holy; if you consider the rites of purification and consecration of the priests and Levites, that they might be hallowed to minister before Jehovah, they all teach the holiness of God. In like manner the holiness of the temple, of the altar, of all the sacrifices, teach, He must himself be holy, whose presence sanctifies them all. Thus the ritual cleanness and purifications required of all persons who were allowed by the ritual to appear in the Presence, the severe punishments threatened by the ritual against all persons who should profane the place of the Presence by coming into it under any uncleanness, were evident declarations of the holiness of the place where God who is holy is present. By such rites the Hebrew church was taught to say, Who among the gods is like unto Jehovah, glorious in holiness? One sense in which the church ascribed holiness to God plainly intimated that God was of purer eyes than to behold any iniquity. The ritual represents God, as God proclaims his own name, and teaches his own perfections: *Who will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's chil-* Exodus, xxxiv. 7.

dren, unto the third and fourth generation. The ritual expressly taught such holiness in the priests and in the people, as to declare all who were anyways impure or unclean, were unfit to appear in the Presence, and had forfeited all the privileges of an holy congregation, till they were cleansed by the washings and sacrifices the ritual directed for their atonement and purification. Such laws concerning holiness and purity in lesser matters, inferred an holiness of an higher nature, and that the governing perfections of God will not allow, cannot approve, greater and higher transgressions of moral disobedience. These appear sins more evil in their nature, more displeasing in the sight of God, and to which the righteousness and justice of God had assigned severer punishments in their own law.

It was far from the design of the ritual to teach only a ceremonial holiness; the intention of it appears plainly to set the holiness of God as one of his governing perfections in a full and strong light; to teach the high importance of being holy, as God is holy, as well as of being holy, because God is holy: but this instruction of the ritual will appear more clearly as we proceed.

The wisdom of the ritual to make the knowledge it teaches concerning the one only true God more useful, teaches him to

be merciful, at the same time it represents him to be an holy God, therefore proclaimed his name, *The Lord, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, abundant in loving-kindness, goodness, and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquities, transgressions, and sins.* Exod. xxxiv. 6. Not only is God represented as gracious and merciful, but his mercy and grace are exemplified in pardoning iniquity, transgressions, and sins, or all kinds of offences committed against him. The ritual, to encourage the hope of a sinner in the mercy of God, teaches him that there is mercy with God, that he may be feared; that when he shall return unto God with his whole heart, he shall be received graciously and restored to favour. This ritual yet further instructs in the wise method wherein God has appointed to show mercy, supporting at the same time the honour of his perfections and government. The ritual therefore appointed propitiatory sacrifices, or atonements, washings and purifications, to teach the guilt of sin, the punishment due to sin from an holy God, and a righteous Governor of the world, to teach the sinner to honour God by such acknowledgment and confession, which was to accompany his sin-offering and atonement, and also to express his hope in the mercy of God, his trust in the promise of God, that, returning to God with his whole heart, his sin shall be for-

given. Hence the Psalmist concludes,
Psalm lxxxvi. 5. *For thou, Lord, art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon thee.* It is observable that the Hebrew ritual encouraged the Hebrew nation to hope for mercy and favour, as God's favoured people.

There is a river, says the Psalmist, *the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.* The holy place, and divine Presence, principal parts of the ritual, assured peculiar protection and grace, as it
Ps. xlvi. 4, 5. follows, *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.* The power of God is taught by his name Jehovah, the Lord of hosts; his peculiar grace and favour to the children of Israel, is expressed in his peculiar relation to them, as their God,
7. and as his church: *The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.* Thus the Hebrew ritual, and especially the Shechinah, or divine Presence, the principal part of it, very clearly taught the important doctrines of true religion, the existence and unity of God, his general and particular providence, his holiness and justice, his mercy and goodness, his great governing perfections, and of greatest influence to promote real virtue and true goodness, the most genuine fruits of the fear and love of such a God as the ritual

represents Jehovah to be, and as the most honourable service of Him who dwelt in their temple as the Holy One of Israel.

Doctrine of prophecy, and divine authority of the law.

All these truths were moreover confirmed by another great doctrine, the doctrine of prophecy. The Hebrew ritual showed one act of particular providence, and especial grace to that people, as the church of God, in raising prophets, and revealing himself towards them, in particular by his servant Moses, who is represented, throughout the whole law, as giving them the several rites and constitutions of their religious worship in the name of God, and as with the authority of Jehovah.

Jehovah himself gave the laws of the ten commands by the voice of the oracle, from the Shechinah; it is therefore said, *And God* (Jehovah) *spake all these words, saying.* Exodus, xx. 1. But the majesty of the Presence, *the thunderings, lightnings, the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, caused the people to remove and stand afar off,* and to say unto Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.* 18, 19.

After this, the word of the Lord came to Moses, and he was commanded to make known the will and command of Jehovah to the people or congregation. One instance may be sufficient to give a right notion of this: when that part of the ritual which directed the consecration of Aaron

and his sons to the priesthood, was appointed, it was thus delivered by Moses as a Prophet, and as a revelation from God;

Levit. viii. 1. *And the Lord* (Jehovah) *spake unto Moses, saying.* This direction from the voice or oracle of Jehovah, is not given to all the people or whole congregation of Israel, but to Moses, to report to the congregation: accordingly,

4, 5. *Moses gathered the assembly together, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.* Here Moses delivers a message from Jehovah, or in his name enacted this part of the ritual.

Divine appearances and divine revelations were known to the Hebrews, in the history of their fathers; but when a law was to be given, a collection of many precepts and constitutions, to be a ritual of worship to many ages, the wisdom of God recommends it to the esteem and obedience of the Hebrews by the authority of a divine revelation. He raises Moses a Prophet, and distinguishes him from other

Deut. xxxiv. 10. Prophets; so that *there arose not a Prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.*

The doctrine, then, of a revelation was taught and confirmed by the ritual; for Jehovah spake to Moses what he directed him to speak to the people, and God confirmed the authority of Moses as a Prophet,

and recommended him to the attention of the people as the greatest of Prophets, *in all the signs and wonders which he sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.* These signs and wonders were so many and so great, that none could be ignorant of them, or reasonably doubt the truth of them. The very ritual itself was indeed a constant and standing evidence of revelation and prophecy: the voice from the oracle was a revelation from Jehovah: the manner of consulting is so particularly described, the answers given by it were so full and so faithfully executed, that the Hebrew history was a constant attestation to the authority of the Hebrew ritual. Deut. xxxiv. 11, 12.

Hence the Hebrews taught, as articles of their creed, that they were to acknowledge prophecy, and receive Moses as the chief of Prophets. The sixth foundation (says Maimon *) is prophecy: the seventh

* Fundamentum sextum est prophetia.

Fundamentum septimum est prophetia Mosis doctoris nostri, scil. ut credatur ipsum omnium Prophetarum, qui ante ipsum, vel post ipsum fuerint, patrem fuisse, qui omnes gradu sunt ipso inferiores.—*Maimon. Porta Mosis*, 168, 169.

Fundamentum octavum est lex è cœlo, scil. ut credatur, universam legem istam, quæ apud nos hodiè re-

foundation is the prophecy of Moses our master, that we believe he was the chief of all that were before him, or that shall be after him, who were all inferior to him in degree: the eighth foundation is, that the law came from heaven, and that we believe all that law that we now have among us, was all given to Moses from heaven, and all that was delivered by the mouth of God.

Thus were the authority and obligation of the Hebrew law and ritual established, and thus did they confirm the doctrines of the existence, unity, and governing perfections of Jehovah their God, of his general and particular providence, by the attestation of propheey and revelation; a short and sure way of teaching a nation and whole people. It is found in constant experience, that the whole people of a nation in general have neither leisure, nor inclination, nor attention, nor capacities to learn these truths in a long chain of consequences and reasonings; and the same experience showed with what advantage the Hebrew church learned these truths from their law and ritual as a revelation: it preserved the profession and belief of these doctrines among them, when they were almost lost throughout the whole

peritur, esse ad Mosem cœlitus demissam, totamque ex ore Dei profectam.—*Ibid.* 173.

world, either in atheism or polytheism, superstition or scepticism, all hurtful and ruinous to true religion.

We shall more properly consider in another place, how useful a belief of the doctrine of prophecy was; in particular, a veneration for the Mosaical ritual, to preserve the Hebrews from the corruptions of their neighbour nations, who pretended the directions of the gods they worshipped, and the answer of oracles, to give reputation to their superstitious and idolatrous rites as acceptable to the gods, and effectual means of obtaining their favour. The Hebrews had not only an oracle, and an oracle of Jehovah the true God dwelling among them, but this oracle moreover expressly required they should have no recourse to any other gods, or consult their oracles, whatever pretences idol worshippers might make to the warrant of oracles, or success in obtaining their favour by their idolatrous rites and ceremonies.

The very notion of prophecy greatly assisted the faith of the Hebrew church by confirming them in the belief of truths most worthy God's perfections and government, and to fix those truths upon their hearts, with the reverence and authority of the word of Jehovah: this greatly served to keep them from the danger of hearkening to the pretended inspirations of the heathen priests, or oracles of the

heathen gods. This was a very wise reason, and, in answering this design, the ritual answered a very important end in religion.

They considered Moses a Prophet, the greatest of Prophets which God had as yet ever raised up to the world; they received what Moses commanded them, as what Jehovah spake to Moses by his oracle, which therefore all the people had reason to hear and to obey; and as this revelation gave a clear and useful instruction in the most essential truths of religion, so it enforced those truths by a sense of the highest authority and concern.

Observe how this represented the happiness of the Hebrew church. *This is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death; and he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them, yea he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand, and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.* How strongly is the authority of this revelation represented and recommended to the observation of the Hebrew nation, as a great act of grace to them: *What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them*

Deut. xxxiii. 1, &c.

Deut. iv. 7, 8.

as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for? and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day? This recommended all the principles of religion taught by it, to esteem, affection, and obedience.

The Hebrew ritual did not teach these doctrines of religion as matters of speculation only; it represented them to the Hebrew church as practical principles to better their minds, to improve them in virtue and goodness, and to promote their perfection and happiness. The noble author* already mentioned, considers the worship of God as one of those principal truths which common understanding, and

* Solam unius Dei adorationem communis notitia, sive consensus universalis docet. Inde divina illa religio (sine cujus aliqua formula, nulla gens, vel quidem barbara extitit) non solum ob beneficia, ex ipsa providentia communi collata, sed ob ea etiam quæ ex gratia, sive providentia rerum particulari, impendebantur, ubique gentium sancita est. Inde non solum orari, sed exorari posse, Numen illud cœleste, ex facultatibus omni homini sano et integro, insitis, creditum est.

Inde denique (quod adhuc majus quidam spirat) ad eventuum futurorum dignotionem, consulebatur numen avatibus, quibus solenne fuit, nihil serium numine inconsulto, aggredi. *Herbert de Veritat.* p. m. 271.

Non enim operibus suis se claudi patitur, causa rerum sapientissima; ultra communem, dilectis suis, particularem exhibens gratiam, quod cum in seipso experiri posset, nonne injustum fuerit, eandem Deo opt. maximo denegare potentiam.

the universal consent of mankind, have taught as essential to true religion. Hence, he observes, came that divine religion, without some form of which you find no nation, even the most barbarous; and this not only for blessings of common providence, but for such also as were given of favour and grace, or particular providence. Hence it was received from principles implanted in every sound and right mind, that the supreme Deity was not only the object of prayer, but that he was also to be entreated in hopes to obtain his favour; yet further, that he was to be consulted about future events, so that it was the custom to attempt no great action without asking advice of the Deity: for the most wise Cause of all things does not suffer himself to be confined in his works; but, besides general blessings in common, he shows particular favours to such whom he loves, which power, when every man can experience in himself, will it not be very unjust to deny it to the greatest and best of Beings?

The same noble author further observes, that virtue, in conjunction with piety, was always accounted the principal part of divine worship *.

* Virtutem cum pietate conjunctam præcipuam partem cultûs divini habitam esse, et semper fuisse.——Ex ea veram spem, ex vera spe fidem, ex vera fide amorem,

As virtue, in conjunction with piety, arises from a conscience rightly instructed in the doctrines of truth; from virtue, in conjunction with piety, will arise true hope; from true hope, faith; from true faith, love; from true love, joy; from true joy, happiness.

It is natural to the minds of men (adds our author*) to have a dread of wickedness, so that they were naturally instructed that repentance was to be a remedy against vice and iniquity.

And finally, he observes, to enforce these principles, there was a common notion of rewards and punishments, which religion, law, philosophy, and (what is yet more) conscience taught, either openly or implicitly; openly, in the doctrines before mentioned (of elysian fields, metempsychosis, hell, &c.); implicitly, in the doctrines taught of the soul's immortality, and that God was an avenger of those sins

ex vero amore gaudium, ex vero gaudio beatitudinem, insurgere docetur.—*Herbert de Veritat.* 274.

* Horrorem sceleris animis hominum semper incedisse, adeoque illos non latuisse vitia et scelesta quæcunque expiari debere ex pœnitentia.—*Ib.* 276.

Premium vel pœnam nos manere post hanc vitam transactam, omnis religio, lex, philosophia, (et quod magis est) conscientia docet, aperte vel implicite; aperte, supra allatis nominibus freta; implicite, vel animi immortalitatem statuens, vel Deum ultorem scelerum, quæ impune hac in vita, quispiam commiserit.—*Ibid.* 280.

which were committed, but not punished, in this world.

These are some of the principal doctrines and motives of true religion, and to that perfection and happiness the wisdom and goodness of God designed by religion, that is, to promote the honour of God, the Creator and Governor of the world, in the true perfection and best happiness of his creatures, more especially his reasonable creatures the world of spirits.

Let, then, the Hebrew ritual be examined by these rules, and we shall find it well answers these ends, and is wisely fitted to promote them: this will show it a wise and useful institution. This may in part appear from what the Hebrew church received and held as doctrines taught by their law, and what the law and ritual appear designed to teach.

Maimon * makes the fifth article of the Hebrew creed, that God is to be worshipped, that all reverence and obedience are to be given to him, but to no other being inferior to him, whether angels or stars, heavenly orbs or elements, or any thing

* Fundamentum quintum illum esse qui colendus est, cujus veneratio et obsequium prædicanda, neque alium eorum qui ipso essentia inferiora sunt, angelorum nempe, stellarum, orbium cœlestium, elementorum, aut quicquid ex iis componitur, præstandum; hujus Dei gloriosi et formidabilis præceptum est ut diligamus eum, atque (nobis) ab eo timeamus.—*Maimon. Porta Mosis*, 167. *De Fund. Legis*, l. 11. s. 1.

compounded of them; or, in other words, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Our author further teaches * how the Hebrew church was directed to worship God; it is the command of this glorious and fearful God, that we love him, that we fear him, and that we be careful to honour his name, and not to profane it in any way whatsoever.

He accounts virtue joined with piety the most honourable and acceptable worship of God, as the children of Israel were commanded not to profane his holy name, *for I will be hallowed among the children of Israel, I am the Lord which hallow you.*

Our author † still further lays it down as a fundamental of the Hebrew faith, that God will reward those who keep the commandments of his law, and that God will punish those who transgress them; that the life to come is the greatest reward, and the greatest punishment, cutting off, *i. e.* of the soul in the life to come.

* Toti domui Israelis mandatum est, de sanctificatione istius nominis, Ut sanctificor inter filios Israel. Admonita quoque est ne illud prophanaret, Non prophanabitis nomen sanctum meum.—*Ibid.* c. 5.

† Fundamentum undecimum, Deum remuneraturum eos, qui præstiterent mandata legis, et pœnas iis qui eadem vetita, patraverint inflicturum; maximum autem præmium esse mundum futurum, et maximam pœnam excidium.—*Porta Mosis*, 176.

You here see the doctrines of the Hebrew church well agree with the essentials of religion, according to Lord Herbert, taught by the best light of reason, and confirmed by general consent of men of sound minds. Thus the Hebrew ritual was an institution of great use and public benefit; for it not only taught that God was to be worshipped, but, moreover, how he was to be worshipped, not barely by outward rites and ceremonies, as some have very unjustly represented it, but with an inward temper of mind, with virtuous and good affections of heart. It appears the design and intention of the ritual to teach and exhort such inward temper, and is so explained by the law and Prophets, the best interpreters and authorized expositors of the ritual.

As the ritual itself appears to have a spiritual or figurative meaning, expressive of temper and affections suitable to the design of the actions; so the other laws of their religion, the exhortations of their Prophets, called upon them to forsake the evil of their hearts and of their ways, and by sincere repentance to return unto God with their whole hearts, with promises of a gracious acceptance, or threatenings of severe displeasure and punishment. These were justly accounted by the Hebrew church as authoritative expositions of their law and ritual.

Consider the general design of the ritual, and you will perceive it manifestly intended for the honour of Jehovah as the only true God, as from a people consecrated to his service, and to show forth his praise. The Presence or Shechinah, the temple, the holy place, the priests ministering before the Presence, all the offerings and sacrifices, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, stated and occasional of all kinds, offerings of thanksgiving, peace-offerings, sin and trespass offerings, show that this worship of God was to consist in a temper of heart sincere and upright, in giving thanks to God for blessings received from him, in sincere hope and trust in the power and goodness of Jehovah to give the blessings for which they made their prayers unto him, in sincere professions of sorrow and concern for having offended God by every trangression of his laws, and an upright design to break off their sins by repentance, that their iniquities might not be their ruin. Their sin and trespass offerings had plainly this instruction; there was the same, or rather more reason for this inward temper in confession of moral crimes, of sins against the laws of the ten commandments, for which no ritual sin-offerings were appointed; whence David justly infers in such case, *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Psalm li. 17.

In like manner the whole ritual very plainly taught, that a pure heart as well as clean hands, were requisite in the worship of Jehovah. The very washings which purified from the filthiness of the flesh, taught, by an easy meaning, the necessity of being cleansed from all filthiness of the spirit, to appear in the presence of the most holy God. The ritual actions were manifestly designed to express a moral and spiritual meaning. The bare consideration of the ritual itself, the general use of ritual actions in those times, the exposition of the ritual in the other parts of their law, and by their Prophets, put it out of all doubt, that the outward actions were always to be accompanied with inward suitable temper and affections. This is far from indulging a groundless imagination or a licentious use of allegory, which it must be owned are dangerous as well as unreasonable, and often quite lose the true meaning of a figurative expression or ritual action, too often give it a wrong sense, and impose a false meaning upon it. Thus sometimes error has been received for truth, and the weak imaginations of men for the wisdom of God.

Let us then consult the best expositors, the most knowing interpreters of this ritual, the law and the Prophets: these will show us, upon sure principles, the true and genuine meaning of it.

How express is the law itself in requiring an inward temper of heart: *Hear, O Israel; the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* Deut. vi. 4, 5. Again, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?* Deut. x. 12. In the love of God with all the heart are included the principles of all moral righteousness and goodness to our neighbour. This is an imitation of that goodness we adore and love in God: so the law: *He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment; love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.* 18, 19.

It is moreover remarkable in these directions of the law, that they do not only direct this love of God as essential to the true worship and service of God, but they teach it as the true meaning of the ritual, the very end and design of it. Circumcision was a chief rite by which the people of Israel received the mark of an holy seed, the family of Abraham: but the law observes, this circumcision of the flesh has a further moral sense or spiritual meaning: *Circumcise therefore,* says the law, *therefore-* v. 16.

skin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked. This is further explained, *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

Deut. xxx. 6.

The Prophets understood and interpreted the law and the ritual to the same meaning. So the Prophet Jeremiah, *Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem.* The allusions to the ritual washings as meaning inward purity, and as teaching the heart is to be purified from all immoral stains that defile it, are so usual and common, that persons must be at some pains to hide it from their observation. *I will wash my hands in innocency,* says the Psalmist; *so will I compass thine altars, O Lord.* Washing with water, by a very easy figure, might signify cleansing the heart from all sinful impurity. Every one easily understands the Psalmist's prayer to this sense, *Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* And again in a following petition: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* The Prophet exhorts in words of like meaning: *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, re-*

Jeremiah, iv. 4.

Ps. xxvi. 6.

Psal. li. 2, 10.

lieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool. The Prophet Jeremiah explains this part of the ritual to the same purpose: *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts dwell within thee?* As, then, the ritual was designed to teach the same purity of heart with the law and Prophets, it plainly directed the worship of God not to consist only in outward ceremony, but in real piety, true virtue and goodness. The ritual required a strict cleanness and purity in every one who approached the presence of Jehovah in his sanctuary; but this had an evident moral, and is expressly so interpreted, of real virtue and true goodness. When the Psalmist inquires, *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* he answers in the spiritual meaning of the ritual cleanness, *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.*

Isaiah, i. 16, 17, 18.

Jerem. iv. 14.

Psal. xv. 1, 2, 3.

How evidently further does the ritual, expounded by the law and the Prophets, teach and exhort repentance, and so ex-

plain the nature, and urge the necessity of it, that no precepts of moral virtue carry it higher. Confession of sin is a considerable part of the ritual itself. It is appointed on the great day of expiation, that *the high priest shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins.* Private persons, as well as the high priest, were also directed by the ritual to confess every sin by them committed when they offered their sin and trespass offering.

Levit. xvi. 25.

Numb. v. 5, 6, 7. *And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty, then they shall confess the sin that they have done, and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.* By this direction, if a man had sinned by injuring his neighbour, he was obliged to confession and restitution, to confess his sin as an offence against God, as well as to recompense the injury he had done his neighbour. Confession of sin included a profession of sorrow for having done evil, with purpose of heart to forsake their evil ways, and to return unto God with their whole hearts, as may fully appear by comparing Levit. xxxi. 40, &c. with Deut. iv. 29.

Thus, when the Psalmist acknowledged his sin, it was with this declaration, *for I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.* The Wise Man very rightly expresses it, by forsaking of sin: *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* In like manner the Prophet exhorts to repentance: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Thus God himself describes the repentance he requires: *Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel?*

Psalm xxxviii. 18.

Proverbs, xxviii. 13.

Isaiah, lv. 7.

Ezekiel, xviii. 30, 31.

You see, then, with how little truth or honesty the Hebrew ritual is accused of preferring outward rites and ceremonies to true virtue and goodness, in which repentance is so well explained and so strongly enforced. The law and ritual have themselves fully determined against such false and injurious reflections. The words of the Prophet Joel are a sufficient confutation of all such prejudices: *Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with*

Joel, ii. 12, 13.

weeping, and with mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments (or, rather than your garments), *and turn unto the Lord your God.* Whatever outward rites attended the confession of their sins, they were to be accompanied with real inward repentance, and returning unto God with the whole heart. David well observes, concerning those sins for which the ritual appointed no sacrifice, that it yet taught the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit: *For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Psalm li. 16, 17.

The Hebrew law further appears very careful to prevent an abuse of the ritual to any such superstition: it therefore keeps in perpetual remembrance the great comparative difference between virtue or moral goodness, and the strictest observation of ritual constitutions: *I will not reprove thee,* says God, *for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat out of thy folds: for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy*

Psalm l. 8, &c.

vows unto the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. It is therefore laid down as a maxim, *Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God.* 23.

Hence the Wise Man observes, *To do justice and judgment, is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.* How strongly does the Prophet represent this difference! *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.* When this inward spirit of devotion is wanting, the rites, even of sacrifices, are declared unacceptable, even abominable, in the sight of God. *He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.* Prov. xxi. 3. Isaiah, lxvi. 2. 3.

Observe once more, how the Prophet Jeremiah exhorts an attention to this truth: *The word came from Jehovah to Jeremiah, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord: thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.* He proceeds to warn Jerem. vii. 1, 2, 3.

them against a superstitious hope of acceptance, on account of their ritual observances and privileges: *Trust not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.* What God requires, what they are principally to attend, is, *thoroughly to amend their ways and their doings; thoroughly to execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;* or, principally to regard virtue joined to piety.

Finally, to show that God always preferred virtue and goodness to external observances, the Scriptures use the strongest expressions: *For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.* It has been thought, and with great probability, that the rites of the Hebrew ceremonial worship had not been so numerous, if their proneness to idolatry, so notorious in the affair of the golden calf, had not made the strongest fence necessary to keep it out. However that may be, the ritual took very great care to place the chief part of acceptable worship in true virtue and goodness, joined with real piety; in righteousness,

Jerem. vii, 22, 23.

mercy, the love and fear of God. This was a truth so clearly taught, and so well established, in the Hebrew church, that the scribes acknowledge it to be the first or the chief commandment, with all their zeal for their law: *Well, master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices.* Mark, xii. 32, 33.

Some, to avoid these declarations of the Prophets, so express and full in point, are willing to suppose that they are not properly interpretations of the ritual, but rather supplements to it, to exhort to virtue and goodness, which they imagine the ritual did not sufficiently teach and enforce.

But such suppositions will appear, on examination, without any support from reason or fact, and therefore are not to be admitted as evidence, or allowed as arguments, when on the other hand there is strong evidence from reason and facts, to prove the exhortations of the Prophets are proper interpretations of the ritual, and therefore arguments and motives drawn from it.

The exhortations themselves appear natural, fit, and proper instructions of

the ritual. Every rite, in its own nature, is a significant action. The common, civil ceremonies of bowing the body, or uncovering the head, are used as marks of respect. The rites of worship used before the Presence, were declarations that reverence and purity became the worshippers of Jehovah and the presence of the Holy One of Israel. What more natural, fit, and proper, than to consider the ritual as directing a good conscience, in a sincere regard to the true meaning of what the rite signified; as an Apostle justly explains the intention of the Christian rite of baptism, *not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*

1 Pet. iii. 1.

Do not the purifications of the ritual naturally point out this answer of a good conscience, to *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of spirit, as well as flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?*

2 Cor. vii. 1.

It is further to be observed, that the Prophets give these exhortations as their own sense of the ritual, and, in their judgments, the proper meaning of it; therefore they use the rites, and choose to use the ritual expressions, in a moral meaning, and by them to exhort to moral goodness. Circumcision, sacrifices, washing, cleansing, purifying, in the language of the Prophets, mean broken and contrite hearts, gratitude and thankfulness to God for his

goodness, forsaking the evil of their thoughts and their ways, and returning unto God with their whole hearts; that is, real repentance and true reformation. This use of the ritual and ritual expressions, in their exhortations, plainly shows how they understood the ritual, and that they believed the people would understand it in the same manner with them.

There is yet another consideration, partly taken notice of before, that the ritual itself confirms this meaning in some of the chief and most eminent parts of it; which may well be understood a comment on all the rest.

It is well known, the institutes of the Mosaical law contain moral as well as ritual commands; that on these commands hang all the law and the Prophets; or, as it is observed by a very good judge of Scripture language, it appears manifestly, through the law and the Prophets, that these are what all the revelations of God to mankind are designed to explain and enforce. It was therefore generally allowed these were the great commandments; nor was there any other commandment greater than these. Now, these laws of the ten commands, you observe, are interwoven into the Hebrew ritual, and made a part of it, in the strictest sense, and distinguished as a chief and more eminent part of the ritual.

Dr. Clark on Matt. xxii. 40.

These commands were promulged by the immediate voice of the oracle, recommended in the most solemn manner to the regard and obedience of the Hebrew church. These commands were written on two tables of stone, by the finger of God. The ritual expressly directs, that a rich ark, or chest, should be prepared, in which to put these tables of the law. When these tables were put into the ark, they were to be covered with the richest covering of gold, which was to be called the mercy-seat; and over it were the cherubim of glory, or of the Shechinah, shadowing the mercy-seat. It was to be brought into the most holy place, and become the throne of Jehovah, and seat of his immediate presence in the church.

Heb. ix.

This was manifestly a part of the ritual; a chief part of the ritual: it manifestly called upon all the members of the Hebrew church to consider their laws of the ten commands, that is, the laws of true piety, righteousness, and goodness, as the principal of all their laws, and of the institution of their covenant with Jehovah; or an Hebrew worshipper who should not regard the ritual of the tables of the covenant, of the ark of the covenant, of the mercy-seat, and of the glory of Jehovah over it, might full as well disregard circumcision, sacrifices, purifications, or the holiness of the altar and temple.

When, for many wise reasons, the Mosaical law was to be a ritual, how wisely were the moral laws incorporated into it, and made so chief a part of it, to make the ritual itself teach the necessity of inward purity, true righteousness, and real goodness, and their preference to any bare rites or ritual actions whatsoever!

Rewards and punishments.

Sanctions of laws are of such use and advantage to secure obedience, that they are usually accounted a good sign of the wisdom of the laws themselves: for, though rewards and punishments do neither properly direct nor oblige, the precept and obligation arising from other reasons; yet they are found, in constant experience, of great use, and in many cases of necessary use, to secure an obedience to laws: so that annexing rewards and punishments to obedience and disobedience, is esteemed a considerable part of public justice, in the administration of government, and, as such, of the justice and righteousness of God, as the supreme Governor of the world.

In laws moral, promulgated by the common light of reason and consciences of all men (Lord Herbert's *Notitiæ communes)*, the sanction is notified by, and together with, the promulgation. For, as good is always right, and evil always wrong, in the reason of God, the Governor of the world, good must always be approved and acceptable to God; evil, on the contrary,

disapproved by him, and displeasing to him. Hence Lord Herbert observes, that from these common principles and notices of reason and conscience, it became a general persuasion, that there were rewards and punishments after this life*. Most nations asserted the doctrine in general, how much soever they differed in particulars, as to their place, or as to their nature and kind. The happiness of the good, and pains of the wicked, is a doctrine expressly taught in the writings of all heathen nations; and it is a doctrine taught implicitly in the immortality of the soul, and the justice of God punishing sins, such sins in particular as were not punished in this life.

It is a very just observation, that the common principles of reason and conscience, confirmed by their natural hopes and fears, from apprehensions of the immortality of their souls, and the righteousness and justice of God, in rewarding good and punishing evil, taught all nations to look for them, and expect them in another world. So that, according to our noble author, the perfections of God, the reasons of good government, the most natural affections of men's minds, formed on the most common and universal principles,

* Est igitur præmium, et pœna, notitia communis in quæstione An. licet in quæstione, quid, quale, quantum, quomodo, &c. plurimum disceptetur.—*Herbert de Veritate*, 281.

taught the sanction as well as the precept and obligation of this universal law; and as a part of the law it was implanted in the conscience, and written on the hearts of men.

If these were principles sufficient to teach all nations, as we find they were in fact, were they not sufficient, think you, to teach them to the Hebrew nation, which, besides the common principles of natural reason and patriarchal tradition, had the assistance of particular revelations to their fathers, Abraham and his family?

The whole idolatry and idolatrous worship of their heathen neighbours supposed the existence of separate spirits; that the souls of their ancestors, of men of eminency while they lived, became gods after death, and were to be worshipped as such. On this supposition they consulted the dead, or the souls of persons deceased, advanced to greater knowledge and higher capacities, now in a state of separate existence *. It seems plain, the Hebrews had the same notions in common with all their neighbours, of the immortality of the soul; though their law and ritual most

* Isis and Osiris were princes of Egypt while they lived, and gods of the Egyptians after their death. Ammon, while he lived, governed Egypt as a king; after his death he was consulted as an oracle, which, for a long time, continued one of the most famous in the world.

wisely guarded against the superstition and idolatry the heathen ran into from an abuse of it.

The prohibition of necromancers, and consulting the dead, supposes a notion of separate spirits, and that they believed the existence of the souls of men after the death of their bodies. What temptation could Saul have had to consult the spirit of Samuel, if he had not believed the separate existence of the Prophet's soul, after his natural death?

There seems, then, to be no need of confirming the doctrines of the soul's immortality, and of the rewards and punishments of another life, consequent upon it, by particular revelation, especially in a ritual law. These doctrines might very wisely be left to the common notions, equally received in the Hebrew nation, as in all the nations of the earth.

The ritual of the Hebrews was a positive law, and had a sanction very fit for such a constitution. The covenant with Abraham promised to make him a family, and increase it into a great nation; to give them the land of Canaan for an inheritance; to bless them, and make them prosperous in the land the Lord their God should give them. This particular covenant with Abraham and his seed, is of different nature and consideration from the general covenant of religion with Noah,

Enoch, or other pious patriarchs. This general covenant taught good men how they were to walk with God, in righteousness and goodness, and keeping themselves from all moral evil and wickedness. The same light of reason which taught men what was right and good, wrong and evil, taught what they had to hope from the mercy and goodness of God; and what to fear from his justice, as the righteous Judge of the earth, and that in a state of separate existence, when their souls should return to God who gave them.

These principles taught, that the moral obligations and sanctions continued invariable, whatever positive institutions might be superadded to the moral laws promulgated by the common voice of reason and natural conscience. The positive laws of the Hebrew ritual were given principally in regard to the Abrahamic covenant and promises, and to preserve the Hebrews in the hopes and obedience of God's peculiar people. Now you perceive plainly, that sanctions most suited to these promises and this covenant, were the protection and blessing of a particular Providence, or the threatening of temporal calamities in God's forsaking them: and, accordingly, we find these were the sanctions, a promise of temporal blessings and national prosperity in the land which God promised to their fa-

thers, and which the Lord their God gave unto them.

But why, will some say, were not the promises of another life, and the fears of punishments after death, joined to the temporal blessings of the promised land? Was it not, they add, a defect in the Hebrew ritual, that there was not an express declaration of future rewards and punishments in it, to encourage obedience, and discourage disobedience?

This question has appeared to some a great difficulty; when yet, I conceive, it is very easily removed, only by considering the Hebrew law consisted of two parts; the one ritual, the other moral. It was only the ritual that was properly the law of God, by Moses; the moral was given, together with the very nature of man, at his first creation. Now, the ritual had its own proper sanction in temporal rewards and punishments; the moral law had, from the beginning, the sanction of future rewards and punishments; and so actually had them, at the very time the law was given, and on the same evidence given to Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the pious patriarchs.

On closer consideration, I believe, it will appear, it would have been inconvenient and dangerous, if the rewards and punishments of another life had been made the sanctions of a ritual: this might have

prejudiced men's minds, to raise the value and importance of ritual obedience, and a ceremonial devotion, above the moral duties of virtue and piety. These notions might mislead men into great superstitions; such superstitions as this ritual was designed to guard against, in teaching that ritual observances were so far from being acceptable, that they were an abomination in the sight of God, when they were made a pretence to set aside the moral duties of virtue and piety, or preferred to them. When, then, a sanction was to be given to a ritual, it seems an evident act of wisdom to avoid giving any encouragement to superstition. Men, for instance, were not to be encouraged to believe or hope, that the blood of bulls or of goats would take away the guilt of sin committed against moral laws, or remove the punishment due to moral crimes. The ritual served only to purge ritual defilements, and expiate ritual transgressions; and such it became the sanction to be: ritual obedience and disobedience, merely as such (for every disobedience to the will of God was, on another consideration, to be esteemed and treated as moral guilt); yet mere ritual disobedience, as such, had not, as it ought to have had, the sanction of moral laws, in the rewards and punishments of the world to come.

Yet still the ritual, instead of being a

prejudice to the sanction of the moral law, and the doctrine of the rewards and punishments of another life, was of real use and service to keep up the memory of them, and strengthen the hopes and fears of them; for the ritual most evidently taught that Jehovah, the one only true God, was most holy, just, and pure: it taught his mercy, goodness, and favour; that obedience and disobedience to the moral duties of virtue and piety, were more acceptable or displeasing to him, than ceremonial obedience or ritual transgressions; and as ritual expiations did not reach to moral guilt, the ritual itself taught, that moral guilt was left on the same foot it was, in the more ancient patriarchal state of religion, in which Enoch and Noah walked with God, and were accepted of him.

It may not be improper to observe here, that the ritual, though it does not use it as a sanction, yet supposes the immortality of the soul, and takes for granted the separate existence of departed spirits, as the common belief of the whole nation. This is allowed in the laws against consulting the dead, and against all the idolatrous customs of their neighbours, either in deifying the souls of dead men, or worshipping them as heroes, or as the guardians of mortal men: how many laws of the ritual are evidently founded on this supposition?

The most solemn part of the Hebrew

ritual, the Shechinah, or Presence, in the most holy place, was so represented as to teach the existence of angels, and their employments, as ministering spirits to God. Angels had been so often sent on particular messages, the law was so solemnly given with attendant angels, that it is hardly possible to conceive, how any one of the Hebrew nation could doubt of the existence of separate spirits, or question the immortality of the soul, the universal belief of all nations. This joined with a sense of the moral distinction of good and evil, of the righteousness and justice of God, was sufficient to teach rewards and punishments after this life. All these were taught by the ritual itself, as we have seen; though, very wisely, it did not make future rewards and punishments the sanction of ritual obedience and disobedience, that it might better preserve the just distinction between moral and ritual obligation.

I enter not into the dispute, how far the doctrine of a future state entered into the design of the Mosaical law, as a constituent part of that institution. The question before me is sufficiently answered, if the Hebrews did not remain ignorant of these truths, under their ritual, and did actually believe them, from the common principles that made these doctrines the faith of their forefathers, and the belief of all the nations of the earth. Could they not learn, and

did they not infer from the translation of Enoch, the obedience of Noah, and the
Heb. xi. 6. faith of Abraham, that God *is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him?* that
9. *Abraham, who sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange country, looked*
10. *for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?* and that
25, 26. Moses, when *he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season—had respect to the recompense of reward?* The Apostle to the Hebrews represents them
39. thus arguing, and concludes, *These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises.* And yet
6. they believed that God *was a rewarder of*
14. *them that diligently seek him. They that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country,* says the Apostle, and this country he well understands of an heaven-
16. ly country; *but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.*

When God appeared to Moses, and sent him to deliver the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, he reveals
Exod. iii. 6. himself under this title, *I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* These all were dead, and had not received the promises, yet God makes himself known by

the name of their God. If the Hebrews believed the immortality of the soul, as we have seen they did; if they believed God was the rewarder of those that diligently seek him, as they accounted their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had done, without receiving the promises; might they not hence conclude, that God *is not the God of the dead, but of the living;* and that God, as their God, who had promised to be their exceeding great reward, would give an inheritance in his heavenly city, and crown them with immortality in that better country they sought after, that is, an heavenly?

Matt. xxii. 32.

Let us now make this just reflection on the great advantage and usefulness of the Hebrew ritual, as an excellent means of perfection and happiness, in a conjunction of virtue and piety. This alone might show, what reason there is to reverence the wisdom of God, and his goodness, in appointing his people a law, so well fitted to give the best and most useful instructions in religion. Thus they appear infinitely superior to any body of rites or ceremonies, which either the wisdom of lawgivers, or the invention of priests, or the imagination of any people, had ever brought into use, or established; infinitely better to serve the great ends of religion, the true honour of God, in the real happiness of men, than any, than all the cele-

brated mysteries and rites of the Egyptian or Chaldean, the Grecian or the Roman worship; most of which, as we shall presently see, were not only useless, but dangerous to the ends and uses of true religion.

CHAP. II.

The Hebrew Ritual serviceable to prevent Idolatry.

WE proceed now to consider another great advantage of this ritual, as an hedge against idolatry, at that time prevailing every where, and introducing such forms of worship, and such rites of religion, as were extremely dangerous to virtue and piety, and greatly encouraged the most abominable vices, and all manner of wickedness. So truly was it said of false religion,

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

One design of separating the holy seed of Abraham, by a particular ritual, from other nations, was to make them guardians of true religion, against the superstitious and idolatrous corruptions of it. If it had been of no other service, this alone would justly recommend it to esteem. An institution, even of burdensome rites, of no intrinsic worth in themselves, yet would be an unspeakable benefit to a

people who were in great danger of losing all true religion, in the general corruption of the world, if it should prevent them from *doing those things that are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness;* as the heathen world is described, when it had corrupted true religion; so that as *they liked not to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.* Rom. i. 28, 29. 28.

If you consider either the time or the occasion of appointing this ritual; if you consider the ritual itself, in the nature and kind, in the number and variety of the ceremonies directed by it, you will perceive one principal end of it was to prevent idolatry from prevailing among the holy seed of Abraham.

The positive rites of worship, in the patriarchal state of religion, appear to be few, plain, and easy. Sacrifices, especially burnt-offerings, which every one might offer for themselves, with very few rites, but accompanied with the acts of natural and moral worship, confession, prayer, and praise, seem to have been the only parts of ritual worship; but the corruption of true religion increasing much in the days of Abraham, and reaching his own family, the wisdom of God appointed circumcision a mark of the covenant of Jehovah, the only true God, with him, and with his seed, to put them in constant re-

membrance, by a visible mark in their flesh, of their consecration to God, and that Jehovah had raised them conservators of the truth of the unity, and the sole worship of him, as the one and only true God, in opposition to all kinds of polytheism whatsoever. When this law was given by Moses, the Egyptians, from whose bondage they were just delivered, and the Canaanites, whose land God had given them for their inheritance, had universally corrupted true religion, *and had changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.* It then became the wisdom and goodness of God to make a more effectual provision against this spreading evil. Though many were apt to overlook this design and use of the Hebrew ritual, it deserves particular attention; for, without observing this design of the Mosaical law, we must be ignorant of its true meaning and use, in most of its particular constitutions.

Let it then be observed how this ritual is fitted for this service; how it was actually serviceable to preserve the Hebrew nation, as the church of Jehovah, the one true God, from the corruption of idolatry.

First removing the principles which

First, if this ritual is considered in the whole plan of it, it appears designed expressly to prevent the growth of idolatry, by removing the principles that supported

idolatry. You have seen the doctrines it taught concerning Jehovah, their God. It taught the unity, as well as the existence of Jehovah; that he truly was God, but that there was no other God beside him. It taught, that this one Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and governed his whole creation as supreme Lord: that he governed the world himself, by a particular as well as a general providence: that the most glorious and perfect spirits, the angels, were his servants, and were employed by him, as his ministers to do his will. These principles, so clearly taught in the Hebrew ritual, overthrew all the foundations of idolatry, and all the false maxims on which it was built: it showed all other gods besides Jehovah, must be false gods, idols, the creatures of a vain imagination: it showed, that all those beings whom the heathen world chose for gods, whether the higher intelligences, supposed to inhabit and animate the sun, moon, and stars, or the dæmons, and departed souls of heroes and great men, were not gods, but all of them equally the creatures of the one Jehovah: that all his creatures are to obey him; and that he is obeyed by every creature, of every degree, of every rank, and of every order throughout the whole creation. It seemed further a wise provision against idolatry, to remove such principles as gave some plau-

supported idolatry.

sible countenance to the notion of inferior gods, and inferior worship founded upon it. Many reasoned in such manner as this: Admit there is one only supreme God, maker of heaven and earth, yet may not beings of different order and powers, have different capacities of doing good; and may they not be appointed by the supreme God, guardians of mortal men, dispensers of the several blessings of Providence, protectors of nations, cities, and persons, and then deserve an honour suitable to their rank, and a reverence from men, suitable to the good they receive from them? Do men, they might say, receive so great benefits from the kind and useful influences of the sun, and should they not reverence the glorious archangel that dwells in the sun, and presides over its influences; thank him for what he has done, and pray his favour for healthy seasons and fruitful years to come? Might not men further say, as some actually did, "We reverenced our ancestors on earth, and such men, whose wisdom, love of their country, and other good qualities, promoted the prosperity of nations; and now their affection for their country and their families is improved with their knowledge and power, is it not decent to honour them still? and why may we not consult them for direction, and a better foresight of things to come, now they are

so highly improved in understanding and knowledge, since they departed this life, and seem to be appointed the guardians and protectors of their respective nations and people?"

How likely such reasons were to prevail with many, may appear from the influence like reasonings have, even among Christians, and notwithstanding all that the laws of Moses, and the doctrines of Christ, have done to prevent it. Why might not the Egyptians reason concerning the archangel of the sun, as the Papists do concerning St. Michael or St. Raphael? Why might not the Egyptians hope as much from the deified soul of their ancestor Ham, or Mitzraim, the founders of their nation and polity, as the church of Rome teaches to trust in St. Peter, or St. Paul, or the blessed Virgin, mother of God?

Look back now on the plan of the Hebrew ritual, and you will find, that it not only teaches the unity of God, that there is but one supreme; but it also teaches an unity of worship, or that no inferior beings are to be honoured with any acts of religious worship. The ritual knows no such thing as inferior divine worship; allows no such thing as hero-worship: no temple; no altar; no sacrifice; no feasts; no adoration; no consulting of oracles, or departed spirits, by any kind of rites or ceremonies, are allowed, but are expressly

forbid by it; and every part of worship and divine honour is most carefully appropriated to Jehovah alone, declaring his honour to be incommunicable to any creature, as his self-existent nature. Hence the Hebrew law represents Jehovah as jealous of his honour: *I am the Lord* (Jehovah), *that is my name, and my glory will I not give unto another, neither my praise to graven images.* Every part of worship directed by the ritual to the worship of Jehovah, is understood a part of that glory due to his name. Hence there is a general law: *And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect, and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.*

Isaiah, xlii. 8.

Exodus, xxiii. 13.

You observe, then, how the Hebrew ritual is formed to root out all pretences to idolatry. It directs expressly, there shall be but one temple for the residence, or dwelling-place, of the one Jehovah among them: it directs, there shall be but one altar before this Presence: it directs, that all the acts of public worship, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, shall be offered only before this one Presence, and on this one altar. Sacrifices of all kinds, whole burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, and offerings of thanksgiving, were all limited to this one house and Presence. All occasional sacrifices, all stated commemorations of the mercies of God, were solemn

acknowledgments, that they owed all their blessings to Jehovah alone, not to any inferior gods, dæmons, or heroes.

The passover acknowledged, it was the hand of Jehovah that delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt, and brought them into possession of the promised land. The feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles acknowledged, that the fruitfulness of their land, the ingathering of the fruits thereof, their plenty and prosperity in it, were the effect of the protection and blessing of Jehovah, as their God, with an intention to teach, that a religious acknowledgment of these mercies was an honour and glory due to Jehovah alone; and which they were not to ascribe to any other being, on any account whatsoever.

The ritual further required, that all idol altars, and groves, the places where they worshipped their idol gods, should be overthrown, burnt with fire, and utterly destroyed: *but unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come.* Deut. xii. 2, 3. 5.

Who can imagine that Jehovah, the one supreme God, who appointed such a ritual, did any ways allow the doctrine of inferior gods, and inferior worship, on account of any blessings men had received, or could hope to receive from them, when

the whole ritual so fully teaches, that Jehovah himself blesses them with all the blessings of general and particular providence, or grace; that to bless him for these mercies, to seek to him for the continuance of them, is a glory due to his name, and incommunicable to any other.

Now, these plain instructions of the ritual showed the vanity of imagining some great and powerful spirits, who, from the excellency of their natures, deserved the style of immortal gods, fit to be constituted guardians of mortal men, regents of the sun, the moon, and the stars, to direct their motions, preserve their order, and dispense their influences; to be acknowledged therefore the authors of the good or evil supposed to proceed from the benevolent or malignant aspects of the planets. The Hebrew ritual wisely and usefully taught all such suppositions to be groundless and wild imagination: it taught it moreover to be a dangerous error, which hindered them from perceiving whence they were to hope for all good, and to fear all evil, from Jehovah, as the only true God, besides whom there is no other; and which led them to deny the providence of God, as the author of every good gift, and so to deny him the glory due to his name, and naturally mislead them into a dangerous idolatry.

It was of very great use, if possible, to

root out these errors. The danger of them may appear, from an observation of plain fact, though the wisdom of the Hebrew ritual has hardly been taken notice of in this view. These principles were drawn up into a system in the most ancient times, and were the creed of the heathen nations, as well as their superstition and idolatry. These errors were entertained in the East, and spread over the West, and became the learning and philosophy of Zoroaster and Pythagoras, as well as of the Egyptian priests. The first precept of the school of Pythagoras was, to worship the immortal gods, according to their order, or their different natures and powers, and after them the dæmons, and illustrious heroes, each in their order, the dignity and power belonging to their place and station. So the most ancient writers represent the general received doctrines concerning their immortal gods, dæmons, and heroes, as guardians of mortal men, and objects of their worship.

You see how important it was to put a stop to such dangerous errors, and how wisely the Hebrew ritual took care to instil opposite principles into the minds of the people, by preserving a constant attention to the principal truths of one Jehovah, and one worship, that they might receive no imagination of a variety of objects of worship, whether of heroes, or

dæmons, or immortal gods. How many marks of goodness and wisdom appear in giving the Hebrews a ritual, which in every part so strongly opposed these dangerous errors and principles of idolatry, and so strictly preserved all religious worship to Jehovah alone, as the only proper object of it!

Wisdom of the ritual, in forbidding the use of everyidolatrous rite.

In applying the Hebrew ritual to this use, to prevent idolatry from corrupting the whole earth, and to keep this people from the infection of it, by separating the Hebrew nation from the heathen nations, by this barrier, it will appear wise and useful to keep them from the practice of every idolatrous rite, as well as to discourage the principles on which idolatrous worship is founded.

It had appeared of eminent danger to the Hebrews to have familiar conversation with idolaters: it was an easy step from thence, to join with them in some of their acts of idolatry. These compliances would likely lead them, by degrees, into their more dangerous superstitions, even into their most criminal acts of idolatry. Thus were they seduced by the Moabites: *They called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.* Feasts upon the sacrifices offered to their idols, might appear, at first, only as acts of friendship and civil conversation; but how soon did

Numb. xxv. 2.

these seeming civilities end in bowing down to the idols to whose feasts they were invited! Idolatry is so encroaching, it became the wisdom of a ritual, designed to prevent it, to stop every passage by which it might likely find any entrance; we shall better then perceive the wise reasons of it, if we more distinctly perceive the several methods made use of for this end.

In appointing a ritual.

First, This will appear in appointing a ritual. Many, who have not duly considered this view of the Hebrew ritual, and its important service in separating the Hebrews, by their law, from the heathen nations, as a barrier against idolatry, may conceive that a ritual is of little advantage to true religion, and even that there had been more goodness in making this blessing more general, instead of confining it to one small nation of the earth. Good precepts and wise instructions, with very few rites, and those the most easy and simple, such as was the preceding state of religion under the patriarchs, would, they say, have been much better, and of more general use. Rites and ceremonies are, they say, allowed not good of themselves, noways of equal worth with true virtue and goodness, the fear and the love of God and of our neighbour. Be it so: must a thing be of no use, because it is not of such or such a particular use? The

heathen worshippers of idol gods had their rites, their tabernacles and temples, their priests, their sacrifices, with their feasts upon them; they confirmed and strengthened their idolatry in the use of them. The minds of men, and in particular the Israelites, were so taken up with sensible things, that bare reasonings and doctrinal precepts would have been useless, in their circumstances, to preserve the right knowledge and worship of the one true God without a ritual: they would have wanted, as they actually declared they did, a sensible presence of their God among them, to go before them, and to give assurance of his protection: they would have wanted a ritual of worship, in the use of which they might hope their security and prosperity in the continued favour of Jehovah as their God. They saw their neighbours had rites and ceremonies of worship, and would, likely, have been tempted to think their condition better than their own, when their gods were supposed near to them, and dwelling in their temples, but that Jehovah was far distant from them as the heavens from the earth. It pleased God, who well knew the power of men's prejudices, and what evil consequences they were like to have, to prevent them, by giving them a special presence in his Shechinah, and a ritual of worship, of his own appointment, in the use of which

they had reason to expect his favour and blessing.

The Hebrew nation, then, when God appointed them their ritual, were in such circumstances, from the general idolatry of their neighbours and their own prejudices (not to be wondered at, their long continuance in Egypt considered), that, if it had not seemed good to the wisdom of God to appoint them a ritual, and by that to make them a separate nation and people, it seems morally impossible to have kept them from idolatry, and then the knowledge and worship of the true God must have been lost in the world. Hence, it appears, this institution must of necessity have been the law of one nation, to separate and distinguish it from idolatrous nations, and by such a separation preserve it from idolatry.

2. The wisdom of this ritual appears further in the fulness of the ritual, in appointing so many and so great variety of rites. The same reasons that made a ritual convenient, and in their circumstances even necessary, made a full ritual as convenient and as necessary, such as should reach to every part of worship, as it was to be an hedge, or a fence, against idolatry every way.

Some have observed the Hebrew ritual has a very great variety of ceremonies; many of which regard the presence of Je-

hovah, or the Shechinah; others which regard the temple, the house of Jehovah, or seat of his presence; and others which regard the priests who ministered before the Presence; others which regard their sacrifices, their offerings, and the proper rites of each: what a great variety was there directed for their festivals, purifications, cleanness of foods, their births, their marriages, their funerals, and their mournings! so that there was scarce any action of moment, civil or religious, but the Hebrew ritual gave some directions or other about it.

Here, again, many who have not duly considered the reasons of appointing this ritual, which was not designed a general law of religion to all, but a law to separate a particular people from an idolatrous world, without which no families of the earth could have been preserved from idolatry, take occasion to represent this ritual not only as useless, but as very burdensome too. True religion, they say, was like to be kept out of sight when covered with such a load of ceremonies; the very observation of which must have been an insupportable burden to the whole people. Would it not have been much easier, they are apt to ask, to have permitted the people to dwell quietly at home in their own cities and houses, than to oblige them to travel three times a year to

the place of the Presence? Why did the ritual, they further ask, expose them to so many pollutions, some of which were casual and unavoidable, very few were immoral or defiled the mind; and yet how many ceremonies of washing and purifications were required to make them clean!

But there is one plain and sufficient answer to all such questions as these. Observe of what service it was to the prevention of idolatry, a design of great wisdom and goodness to give such a ritual as should want no additions, or leave any room for any pretended amendments of their own: it would have been full as well, it may be better, to have had no ritual at all, than one defective and imperfect, or wanting in many things, which the rituals of their neighbours had provided for; this would have opened a door to innumerable rites of idolatry; notwithstanding their own law they would have been tempted to borrow from their neighbours what they would imagine had not been sufficiently provided for by their own lawgiver.

We shall better perceive the force of this reason by observing some particular instance; let it be the ritual concerning deaths and burials. The ritual directs, *He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days, and he shall purify himself with it on the third* Numb. xix. 11, 12.

day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean; but if he purify not himself the seventh day he shall not be clean. It is further directed, *When a man dieth in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.*

v. 14. Further, *Whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.* You see the ritual does not only reach to dead bodies, but to the bones and graves of dead men. The ritual takes care to prevent, in particular, some superstitious rites of funerals, and mourning for the dead, in use among the heathen:

Levit. xix. 26, 27, 28. *Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood, neither shall ye use enchantments, nor observe times. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard: ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord.*

However such directions of a ritual concerning dead bodies, the bones and graves of dead men, may appear below the regulations of religion, it will be represented quite otherwise to one who considers the numerous superstitions and dangerous ceremonies of idolatry, which arose from an undue respect for the dead, and customary rites of mourning, funerals, honours paid at the sepulchres and to the

memory of the deceased, their exercises, feasts, sacrifices, and those too often human. These naturally became a religious honour to the ghosts of their deceased ancestors and friends, and were offered to them to render them kind and propitious. You may see many of them in a very learned and most reverend author of our own. I shall mention but one instance: Helena desires Hermione to address Clytemnestra in these words:

" Daughter Hermione, come forth, and take
" These offerings to thy dear aunt's sepulchre;
" These locks of my hair, and this honey mix'd
" With milk, and this wine to pour o'er her grave;
" Which having done, stand on its top, and say,
" Thy sister Helen, to declare her love,
" Offers these rites to thy dear memory."

Abp. Potter, l. iv. c. viii. p. 237.

When such funeral honours were of frequent use, no wonder they respected some as heroes, and, deifying them, still added to the number of their inferior gods. This gave great encouragement to their favourite superstition of necromancy, and consulting the dead by a variety of magical rites. One of the most ancient writers in the world shows, in the example of Ulysses, how far such rites were established and in common use: " He sacrificed a " black sheep in a ditch, filled with new " wine, honey, and milk, and then invok-

" ed the ghosts to prosper them, and re-
" veal the secrets of futurity to them:

" And trenching the black earth, on every side
" A cavern form'd, a cubit long, and wide;
" New wine, with honey temper'd, milk we bring;
" Then living waters, from the crystal spring:
" Now the wan shades we hail, th' infernal gods,
" To speed our course, and waft us o'er the floods."

Ulysses then promises;

" So shall a ram, the largest of the breed,
" Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed."
Homer, Odyssey, l. xi. l. 30, &c.

You see, then, it must have been a ritual that directed what customs should be used in mournings, at funerals, and concerning honours given to the dead; which alone was likely to prevent the idolatrous acts of necromancy, the worship of the infernal gods, and ghosts of men deceased.

After these instances, there is no need, I think, to be particular in others, in order to confirm this observation, that the Hebrew ritual, in order to answer its end as a guard against idolatry, must be full and reach all cases, in which there was any danger idolatrous rites should gain admission among them. Apply this reason to rites of marriage, women in and after child-birth, as well as to deaths and funerals, and you will perceive the wisdom of regarding these cases in the ritual of their religion: a people so eager after some ceremony or other, on every occa-

sion, would have been uneasy and impatient without them, when they saw all their neighbours had rites to use on all these occasions: they would either have adopted them for their own use, or have invented others of their own imagination of equal danger, or of worse consequence; but, as it pleased God to appoint them a ritual, which reached to all these cases, it was a prudent preservative against idolatry, one of the good and wise designs of appointing a ritual.

3. The wisdom of this ritual as a guard against idolatry will yet further appear, as it took into it several constitutions more effectually to prevent too familiar intercourse with idolaters; in particular, intermarriages, entertainments and feasts, and frequent society; these were likely in themselves, and had been found in experience, to mislead them, not only into lesser idolatrous customs, but into the highest acts of idolatrous worship.

By constitutions to prevent too familiar intercourse with idolaters.

This part of the ritual seems to have been greatly misunderstood, or much misrepresented, when supposed to proceed from ill humour, and that it was the effect of a bad temper to mix religion with civil society, and to break off a commerce of friendship by religious rites. It looks, some say, like an hatred of all other nations but their own; no great commendation of a law to teach and encourage so

unbenevolent a temper. But before such accusations are brought against a nation, or against the customs, especially the religious rites of a people, men ought to be sure they are true in fact: if there may be other reasons, if there really are better reasons, it is no commendation, either of their judgment or benevolence, who will still continue such accusations.

It is observable, the law no where forbids acts of kindness or benevolence to any, but expressly requires the love of their neighbour as of themselves, and to do good to them as to their own family and nation. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, was the second great commandment of the law. The laws of charity were a branch of their moral law, and justly allowed by the doctors of the law, of much greater importance than their rites and ceremonies, as we have already seen; ill-will to their neighbours, an unbenevolent temper, therefore, were not the true reasons of providing against a too familiar conversation between the Hebrews and their idolatrous neighbours, however an ill-will to a law of revelation may endeavour to propagate such prejudices.

Hear the law itself, the best expositor of its own meaning: you have the true meaning, and a very wise and good meaning, self-preservation from the danger of a great evil, no less than a loss of the true

religion, and therewith of their happiness in the favour of Jehovah as their God: thus the law; *Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following after me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.* Deut. vii. 3, 4. This was an important reason to prohibit intermarriages, without which all care to prevent idolatry would likely have been useless: it was then convenient to put a stop to such frequent conversations, and especially entertainments, as would have proved an occasion, either of intermarriages, or familiarities as dangerous.

You have observed, in the delineation of the ritual, it made a distinction between foods, declared some sorts unclean, and not to be eat by the Hebrews as an holy people to Jehovah; in particular, there is a very precise prohibition of eating blood in any manner, or on any pretence whatsoever. Lev. xvii. 10. Shedding of the blood of sacrifices, and offering it on the altar, was a rite in common use, both with the Hebrews and their idolatrous neighbours, but with very different intention and meaning; the Hebrews offered their sacrifices, and the blood of them, to Jehovah only, at his altar; but their heathen neighbours offered theirs to

idols and dæmons, esteemed the blood of their sacrifices the food of ghosts and departed spirits, by which they could raise them, make them appear, and answer questions; so that a principal use of blood among them was as a conjuration to raise spirits. Eating of blood then, especially, as was very common in feasts or sacrifices, was supposed an honour to the dæmon, and testifying a sort of communion between them. Now, there was hardly an entertainment among idolaters, but there was something of blood, or some consecrated bread or wine, part of a meat or drink offering to some or other idol, some fowl, or flesh, or fish, peculiarly consecrated to some dæmon; so that an Hebrew could hardly possibly be entertained by an heathen, but he must fall in with some or other of their idolatrous customs. In fact, there hardly appears any one temptation to idolatry, that prevailed so much as friendships contracted with idolaters. The case of Solomon is a melancholy example: that wise prince, once so zealous for his law and religion, was yet seduced into idolatry by this very temptation: *But king Solomon loved many strange women—of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, nor shall they come in unto you; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto*

1 Kings, xi. 1, 2.

these in love. Thus this wise man was seduced; *his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites.* If so great a man as Solomon was taken in these snares, and fell so foully into idolatry by these temptations, how wise, how prudent was it to remove these temptations, in a law designed as a guard against idolatry! 4. 5.

3. We may yet further perceive the reason of this ritual, as a preservative against idolatry, in taking care to recommend it to the esteem of the Hebrew nation as preferable to any other ritual whatsoever. The Hebrews had known the rites in use among the Egyptians, and were soon to know the idolatrous ceremonies of the Canaanites. They were so much inclined to a respect for the customs of the Egyptians, a people who had a very early and high reputation for wisdom, polity, and power; a people in particular famed for their doctrines concerning the gods, and for their ceremonies of worship as highly acceptable to them; so that the idolatrous worship of most nations, in doctrine and in ceremonies, was derived from Egypt. History teaches the high reputation of the Egyptian priests, as divines as well as philosophers, when the earliest of the Greek philosophers went

As preferable to every other ritual.

into Egypt to learn their doctrines; and Greece acknowledged the principles of its learning were brought from thence. What impressions a respect for Egyptian customs was like to make on the Hebrews, may be learnt from what it actually did make. While Moses was in the Mount for forty days, receiving the commands of God, the people grew impatient: *They gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto them, Up, make us gods that shall go before us.* This was the occasion of making the golden calf, and which was consecrated as an emblem of the presence of Jehovah with them; for *Aaron built an altar before it, and made proclamation, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord* (Jehovah). It has been thought this calf of Aaron was an exact imitation of the Egyptian idolatry. It will, I think, be of little use to inquire whether Aaron took his figure of a calf from the Egyptian calf, the symbol of their idol Apis, as some think; or whether, as others, with the learned Archbishop Tennison, from the cherubim on the ark, which had the form of oxen, and were appendages to the Shechinah; it is so far plain that God is here worshipped in a symbol, and in the symbol of a calf, contrary to his own appointed symbol, the Shechinah or cloud of glory, without any resemblance, image, or form of man or animal. Whatever reasons there were which

Exod. xxxii. 1.

5.

Tennison of Idolatry, l. vi. 108, &c.

inclined the people to choose an animal to be the symbol of the presence of Jehovah, and to make that animal a calf rather than any other, it seems evident enough there was too great a regard for Egyptian rites, when they so naturally fell into their notions of superstition. It was then of great concern to obviate such a danger, whether from adopting the idolatrous rites of their neighbours, or following their own superstitious imaginations, to give the Hebrews such an esteem and reverence for a ritual of their own, that they should come to prefer it to every other, however recommended on account of venerable antiquity and long usage, or by the reputation and wisdom of the people which used them, or from the authority of oracles and dæmons, or a fondness for their own imaginations. To answer this end the Hebrew ritual was wisely appointed by the command, and established by express authority, of Jehovah himself. The preface to each of its laws was after this manner: *Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them.* The ritual was not a general rule, leaving particulars to discretion: positive and particular laws established every part of it. This ritual came thus recommended to the Hebrews as the law of Jehovah their God to them, as his peculiar people and an holy nation to him. These were recommenda-

tions above the considerations of antiquity, the use of the wisest people, or even the oracles of dæmons: Moses strongly therefore argues the high esteem the Hebrews ought to have for their own law:

Deut. iv. 5, 6, 7. *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me: keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people: and what nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, in all that we call upon him for?*

It was then fit and becoming the wisdom of God to recommend a ritual to the esteem and obedience of the children of Israel, by his immediate authority: these were powerful motives not to forsake the law of their God, and to make it effectually prove, what it was intended to be, a guard against idolatry.

Hence, it will appear, that one of the common prejudices against the Hebrew ritual is very unreasonable. It is said to be unbecoming the wisdom of God to ratify in so solemn a manner a bare system of rites and ceremonies; that it brings the observation of positive duties too near in esteem and value to the much greater and essential moral duties: but this prejudice is

founded on a double mistake; the one, that a ritual could not deserve such a sanction, when it was a very wise, and the only likely method to answer the good design for which it was given, in preserving the people from idolatry; the other, that the ritual was raised so much in the esteem of the Hebrews, that it was a prejudice to the greater esteem and value due to the essential moral duties. As this objection has been thought plausible, let it appear in the true light in which the ritual itself places it. You have already seen how the law prefers mercy to sacrifice, or the moral parts to the ritual; as also, that the sanction of the ritual is the promise of temporal blessings, in particular, long life, health, and prosperity in the promised land. These sufficiently distinguished the ritual from the moral part of the law, and leave no room for an unreasonable prejudice, as if they were confounded by it.

It is an apparent falsehood, in fact, that the law preferred or equalled the ritual with the moral part; for the law itself, in the most express manner, declares truth, judgment, righteousness, and mercy, the weightier matters of the law, and that the most solemn rites were unacceptable to God without them, even an abomination in his sight.

The Hebrew ritual is yet further recommended as a fit and wise guard against

As liable to no alteration.

idolatry, as it was made an unchangeable constitution, as wanting no alteration or amendment. Thus the law: *Hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you.*

Deut. iv. 1, 2.

All the laws and constitutions of the Hebrew church and nation came from Jehovah, in the expression of the Hebrew creed from heaven: they were not therefore subject to human authority, nor was it in the power of man to change or alter them. In the Hebrew government, the sole authority of making laws was in Jehovah as King of Israel. No magistrate in that government, whether judge, sanhedrim, or senate, congregation of Israel, or popular assembly, either separately or jointly, had power to repeal any of the laws enacted by Jehovah, or to publish new laws in his name, which would be to make laws for his kingdom without his authority. It appears, in fact, that how often soever the children of Israel departed from the ritual in practice, it is not justified on pretence of any power to change and alter it, but severely condemned as a violation

of the law, and as idolatry; as groves, high places, the calves of Dan and Bethel, all which are censured as forsaking the law of Jehovah their God. It is remarkable in the many rules appointed by David and Solomon, for the more orderly performance of the temple-service, they are all strictly according to the ritual, without adding any thing to it, or diminishing aught from it. No alteration in the ritual of the Presence, every thing in the temple exactly as it was appointed in the tabernacle, the same rites concerning sacrifices, sacrificial ceremonies, purifications, sabbaths, the daily, weekly, monthly, yearly services, were continued without alteration, as they were first commanded by Moses. The more regular attendance of the priests and Levites in their proper times of service, and their more orderly service, when in waiting, were no alterations of any rite or ceremony; the ritual, as described by Moses, remained, in fact, unchanged, as it was unalterable by the constitution.

We have the meaning and the reason of this law in a remarkable case.

When the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, had their lot of inheritance settled in eastern Canaan, they built an altar by Jordan. As soon as the children of Israel heard of it, they sent a solemn embassy of ten princes of the tribes to ex- Joshua, xxii. 10.

postulate with them, and represent the
16. evil and danger of such an action: *What trespass is this,* say they, *ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord;*
19. that is, *in building an altar, besides the altar of the Lord our God:* the ritual having appointed there should be but one altar, and that before the Presence. In answer to this charge, the tribes accused
22, 23. said, they did not erect an altar for sacrifice, but as a witness to prove their right in after-times, as belonging to the holy seed of Abraham, to offer their sacrifices on God's altar before the Presence; it was a monument for a memorial, *that we may say, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt-offerings, nor for sacrifices, but it is a witness between us and you.* Both sides, in the strongest manner, allow the ritual unchangeable, and the high importance of
28. not altering it, though only by building another altar besides the altar which was appointed by the ritual before the tabernacle.

Consider, now, the ritual in this view, and you will perceive a further wise provision against the danger of idolatry. This left no room for any superstitious or idolatrous rites to be brought into use, or re-

ceived into practice, on any pretence whatsoever. No constitution could have been secure from corruption, that was not secured against alterations; so wisely did the ritual provide, to stop every inlet to idolatry.

Temporal rewards and punishments best fitted to prevent idolatry.

It further shows, how wisely the plan of this ritual was formed, to prevent idolatry, that the rewards and punishments appointed by the law, were properly chosen and well fitted to attain this end. You have seen before, that though the Hebrews had notions of the immortality of the soul, of the justice of God, and of rewards and punishments in another life, which were common notions, received in all nations of the earth, that yet it would not have been so proper to have made the rewards and punishments of a future state the sanction of a ritual law, lest it should raise the value of ritual obedience too high, and give occasion to superstition, when it was designed to prevent it: Moses, therefore, does not bind his ritual by the consideration of the rewards and punishments of a future state; Moses left them, as they were before he gave his law, the common faith of all nations; but he appoints a proper sanction, fit to overbalance the hopes of idolaters, and their expectations from the protection and favour of the dæmons they worshipped. All the blessings of life were supposed to be so much in the power

of dæmons, inferior gods, guardians of mortal men, that it was a general persuasion, the best way to obtain any of these blessings was to ask them of the proper dæmon, or inferior god, whose province it was to give them. The great skill in dæmonology consisted, then, in knowing what dæmon presided over such and such blessings of life; in what manner, and by what particular rites, they were to be invoked, with most assurance of success. A woman in child-birth, for instance, was not to address herself to Jupiter, when it was the province of Juno Lucina to help her; and the aid of Lucina was to be invoked by the use of peculiar rites: and by such rites duly performed to the proper dæmon, they promised themselves, according to the maxims of this dæmon theology, what blessings they asked from their favour, as health, long life, safety from dangers, success and victory in war, good seasons, fruitfulness of the earth, and, in general, all manner of temporal blessings. This dæmon theology represented the several inferior gods, so fond of these honours, that they were bribed by them to bestow their favours, and were inclined to do mischief to such as should neglect or refuse them. Such encouragements from such hopes, greatly attached idolaters to the use of these rites, and fixed them in an high opinion of them. God, who well knew what

influence this was like to have on men's minds, was pleased to prevent the danger, by promising all these blessings from his own special grace and favour, to those who should honour him, by keeping his statutes and his ordinances. Now, there was no blessing in the power of the dæmons of the heathen to bestow, but was much more in the power of Jehovah, the Creator, the supreme Lord and Governor of heaven and of earth. Hence the Hebrews, in the use of their ritual, were preserved from all the idolatrous rites of dæmon worship, when they had full satisfaction and good assurance they should receive immediately from Jehovah, whatever blessings their idolatrous neighbours could hope to obtain from their dæmons. Moses and Solomon have given so full a catalogue of these blessings, that it includes every blessing the hearts of men can wish or conceive, such as must show happy is that people, even above all other people, whose God is the Lord (Jehovah). Of such excellent use was the Hebrew ritual to preserve from these powerful temptations to idolatry.

Deut. xxviii. 1 Kings, viii.

As it had pleased God to manifest himself from the beginning on proper occasions by his Shechinah, and to reveal his will by his voice, oracle, or word, to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham; so the appearance of the Shechinah was of the most

early use; but on giving the Hebrew law by Moses it became constant, as an essential and principal part of the ritual. Then Jehovah in the Shechinah had a residence, or dwelling-place, a sensible evidence they had the true oracle and kebla among them! They saw and heard Jehovah in these appearances: what encouragement was this to obedience and faithfulness in the covenant between Jehovah and them, to serve him only as their God, and not to fall into the use of any idolatrous rites of worship on any pretence whatsoever!

It would have been a most unreasonable incredulity to deny the truth of these divine appearances, so often seen and heard by so many persons at once, and for so long a time in the camp at giving the law, and in the tabernacle.

To suppose these facts, which the ritual suggested, and not to receive the ritual as established by authority of Jehovah, would have been an incredulity almost as unreasonable as to deny the facts. It must be very unfair to reject such evidence as is supported by rational and sufficient motives of belief, when there is not one good or sufficient reason to disbelieve and reject it. It must destroy all moral prudence, all peace and order in the world, to refuse our belief, and to give no credit to what is highly probable and rational, only on a

groundless, whimsical, and absurd conceit, that we are to believe nothing but what we can prove by a demonstration, or concerning which we cannot prove it is an absolute impossibility it should be false.

This foundation of faith is most judiciously stated and confirmed by Mr. Chillingworth, showing, "That we may be, "and we ought to be infallibly certain, "that we are to believe the religion of "Christ: for, first, this is most certain, that "we are in all things to do according to wis-"dom and reason, rather than against it; "and, secondly, this is certain, that wis-"dom and reason require that we should "believe those things which are by many "degrees more credible and probable than "the contrary. Thirdly, this is as cer-"tain, that to every man who considers "impartially what great things may be "said for the truth of Christianity (or suppose in like manner for the truth of the Hebrew law), "and what poor things they "are which may be said against it, either "for any other religion, or for none at all, "it cannot but appear by many degrees "more credible that Christian religion is "true, than the contrary. And from all "these premises this conclusion necessa-"rily follows, that it is *infallibly certain* "that we are firmly to believe the Chris-"tian religion." Chillingworth, p. 1, c. vi. s. 8.

The Hebrews then might, on the same

principles, be infallibly certain that they were to receive their ritual as of divine authority; that they were not to receive any rites of worship contrary to their own law, especially any rite of superstitious or idolatrous worship, with what reverence soever it might be used in the worship of other gods besides Jehovah. In this provision of a ritual the Hebrews had then an eminent and valuable advantage. With the presence and oracle of Jehovah, they had a ritual for every part of their worship of God's own appointment: how excellent a guard was this from the great danger of idolatry! a blessing of such consequence, that it is an honour to God's wisdom and goodness to separate a people, to preserve the true faith and true worship of Jehovah, the one true God, which could only be done with any prospect of success, but by a peculiar people, and as such separate from an idolatrous world. We shall then see more clearly in this light the goodness and wisdom of a law that should more effectually guard this peculiar people from so general corruption as had infected the whole world in the days of Moses, when the Hebrew ritual was given by him.

CHAP. III.

The Hebrew Ritual considered as a Plan of a better State of Religion in the Times of the promised Messiah.

It was before observed, among the designs of this ritual, as agreeable to the then state of the world, and of religion in it, and to the particular state of the Hebrew nation, as the holy seed of Abraham, this was one, that it might be the plan of a better state of religion, which was to take place in due time, when the promises and covenant made with Abraham, their father, should be accomplished.

God had not only promised to Abraham and his seed to give them the land of Canaan for a possession, but he also promised that in him should all the families of the earth be blessed. In this Abrahamic covenant there are some things peculiar to himself and his own posterity, and some common to all the families of the earth. This is so often repeated as if designed to point it out to particular observation. From which consideration of the covenant a very learned and judicious author has observed, "The promise to Abraham consisting "of two distinct parts, or including two "distinct covenants; the one relating to "the temporal state and prosperity of his

Bp. Sherlock of Prophecy, p. 159.

" seed in the land of Canaan, the other
" to the blessing which, through him, and
" his seed, was to be conveyed to all na-
" tions of the earth; it is, therefore, a
" proper question, with respect to the
" proper state of religion under the Jew-
" ish dispensation, how far the religion of
" the Jews was preparatory to that new
" dispensation which was in due time to
" be revealed, in accomplishment of *the*
p. 163. " *promise made to all nations.* Inasmuch,
" then, as the Jewish religion did virtually
" contain the hopes of the Gospel, the re-
p. 165. " ligion itself was a prophecy."

As this is an important observation in itself, so it may appear to call for our more heedful attention, from the plain proof the whole ritual gives, that, in fact, this was one principal design and intention of it, and from the great use the books of the Christian revelation make of it, in proof that Jesus is the Messiah.

Whoever will compare the *whole* ritual in the whole design and plan of it, will easily see it is a shadow of the good things which did actually come, or a sketch of that state of religion which was actually brought into the world when all the nations of the earth were blessed in the coming of the promised Messiah. When such application is confirmed and cleared up by the better Christian revelation, can any Christian doubt, whether this was one de-

sign of the Hebrew ritual or no? Can any one conceive how such a thing could fall out by mere chance, that so many things should so surprisingly answer to each other, yet without any design or formed intention? This would be such an unconscionable stretch of credulity as the most fanciful application of types and allegories can hardly ever come up to.

As this ritual was, in fact, previous to another and better institution, is it not reasonable to think it was also preparatory to it? that this people might be prepared to receive it whenever it should be blessed with the Messiah? It would thus have all the uses of a prophecy for the conviction both of Jews and Gentiles, though in different manner, or, in the words of the foremention judicious author, "To the Jews "prophecy was the first proof, to the gen- "tiles it was the last; the Jews believed "in Christ because foretold by the Pro- "phets; the gentiles believed the Prophets "because they had so exactly foretold "Christ Jesus: both became firm be- "lievers, having each in his way a full "view of all the dispensations of Provi- "dence towards mankind."

Bp. Sherlock of Prophecy, p. 182, 183.

It is further well observed by an eminent author, "The Hebrew revelation was "of great use in opening and preserving "the doctrine concerning the Messiah to "come. Though there was some light

"to the promise of a Messiah to come "before the times of Moses, yet in the "Hebrew economy, besides more illus- "trious prophecies added concerning it, "the greatest part of their worship itself "alluded to the state of the Messiah, or "seemed to prefigure it *." And, as our author further reasons, "That the doc- "trines of the Gospel might be more ea- "sily received by all, when their hearts "and minds were thus prepared for it †. "Moses," says our author further, "did "not intend a law most perfect in itself, "nor universal, nor eternal, but accom- "modated to those times, and to that "people: he aimed to dispose and prepare "this people, separated from the conver- "sation and corruption of the heathen, by "this intermediate state of religion, for a "more perfect law, to be promulgated in "the days of Messiah ‡."

* Præterea, revelatio ad Judæos facta, maximi erat momenti, usûsque, et ponderis, in aperienda doctrina de Messiah venturo, et ad eandem conservandam. Messiæ promissi lux quædam tenuis apparuerat ante tempora Mosis, sed in œconomia Judaica, præter illustriora ea de re, addita promissa, ipsius cultûs pars maxima ad Messiæ statum alludere, aut eundem præsignare, videbatur.—*Burnet de Fide*, &c. p. 40.

† Ut præparatis auribus, animisque doctrina evangelii facilius omnibus illaberetur.—Id. 16.

‡ Dixi non in animo habuisse Mosem, ut legem in se perfectissimam constituerat, neque universalem, neque æternam, sed tempori populoque suo accommodatam: hunc populum ex consortio, vitiisque gentium,

Having so good reason to consider this ritual as a type or plan, a shadow or sketch, of the good things to come in the days of Messiah, let us proceed to view it more distinctly in this particular.

It must be owned it requires great caution not to indulge any groundless imaginations on such a subject, and not to make our own fancies pass for the meaning of a divine law. This has been done often, both by Jewish and Christian interpreters, but to no good purpose, either to explain the law, or to preserve the honour of the lawgiver.

I shall, therefore, in this inquiry, keep close to the Scriptures themselves, and view it only according to the account Revelation itself gives of it; so you will have divine authority, not the fancies of men, for your application, you will have an application so full and so clear as will sufficiently show this use of the ritual, and the excellency of the ritual in this use of it.

To make this more evident, let us view an example of such application in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In that Epistle you will see the peculiar doctrines of Christianity explained and confirmed by this ritual, which may serve to show you

eductum, et separatum per hanc œconomiam intermediam, ad legem perfectiorem, in diebus Messiæ promulgandam, disponere et præparare studuit.—*Burnet de Fide*, p. 34.

more fully how the Hebrew ritual has answered this wise and useful design.

General arguments from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The general argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, you observe, is to show the excellency of the Christian revelation above former revelations, in particular above the law given by Moses to the holy seed of Abraham.

c. i.

The Apostle, therefore, shows first the superior dignity and high pre-eminence of the Messiah's person above all persons by whom God had ever before spoke to the fathers, neither Moses nor angels excepted; for, when God brought in the first begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him.*

c. ii.

He then removes a difficulty which might arise in the minds of some men, how to conceive such superior dignity in a person of so low condition in this world, exposed to so many sorrows, and suffering death in a manner so ignominious as he did; but it appears these things were no diminution to the high dignity of the Son of God, because the condition in which he appeared was the most fit and proper for the designs of his appearance. *It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. He was, through death, to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He*

was in all things made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest. These were no real diminution of his superior dignity; they were, on the contrary, the methods of his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The Apostle next proceeds to show the superior authority of the Messiah in his office, in particular above Moses, by whom the law was given; a reverence for which law was a principal prejudice of the Jews against receiving the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ. He shows the Messiah *was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, who was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ, as a son, over his own house.* Heb. c. iii.

Our Apostle carries on his argument, and says, that Christ has revealed a much better covenant, containing greater promises and blessings. The revelation by Moses promised the rest of Canaan, and intimated another rest remained for the people of God. This rest, and a promise of entering into it, are clearly revealed by the Messiah, and mentions, among the good things which were to come with him, in particular, that *we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.* c. iv.

Having mentioned the dignity of the

office of the Messiah as an high priest, the Apostle takes occasion to treat this part of
Heb. c. v. his subject more at large. The great opinion the Jews had of their priesthood and sacrifices, was a powerful prejudice in their minds against the revelation of Christ; he therefore first carefully lays down the true notion of a priest or sacrificer, that *he is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:* that every one that is called to this office must be called of God, as was Aaron; that the Messiah was thus called, as God said unto him, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* On this occasion the Apostle observes, as the Messiah was called to be an high priest of an higher order than the priesthood of Aaron, to be a priest after the ancient patriarchal order, in which (as Melchisedec was an instance) the same person was priest and king, who blessed Abraham, and to whom he paid tithes;
c. vii. this order of priesthood was catholic, not confined to one family, but fitly represented a priesthood, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed:—*by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant.*

c. viii. In pursuing this argument the Apostle gives a short but judicious account of the sanctuary and temple, and the manner of the worship there; from whence he well

observes, *that the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary: this was a figure for the time then present* (v. 9); *but could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience. These were carnal ordinances imposed upon them till the time of the reformation,* v. 10. *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,* v. 11. Heb. c. ix.

It is very plain in this argument of the Apostle here is an analogy and conformity between the ritual of the law and the person of the Messiah and his office of the Christ; that the temple, sanctuary, Shechinah, priesthood, offerings, sacrifices, and the whole ritual, were figures for *the time then present,* of the future good things which were to come in the after-days of Messiah: these were all to be fulfilled in that time of reformation, but all to be answered in much greater perfection. See the Apostle himself explaining the whole. *It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these,* i. e. with legal sacrifices, *but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these,* v. 23. *For Christ is*

not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself (the true meaning
Heb. ix. 24. of the figures), *there to appear in the presence of God for us;* of which, again, the presence or visible glory in the most holy place was a figurative representation.

It is to be observed, however, with the Apostle, that whatever conformity or analogy there was between the ritual and the good things to come, there was also a great imperfection in the ritual in comparison with the better state of the Gospel; so that the law, as the Apostle reasons,
c. x. v. 1. *having a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.* And for this there was a very sufficient reason in the
2. ritual itself; *for then they would not have ceased to have offered, because that the worshippers once purged should have had*
3. *no more conscience of sin; but in these sacrifices there is a remembrance again made*
4. *of sins every year; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.*

The Apostle, in his exhortations to Christian obedience, and the more perfect worship of the Christian church, plainly alludes to the directions of the Hebrew ri-
c. x. v. 19, 20, 21, 22. tual: *Having therefore, brethren, boldness*

to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

How plain is the allusion of every expression to the principal parts of the ritual before delineated in the washings and purifications, in the sacrifices, in the sanctuary, and in the Presence! only the outward rite is raised into inward purity, the figure and shadow into truth and reality.

From this plain and useful manner of the Apostle's reasoning from the Hebrew ritual, in explaining the doctrines of Christian faith, and in exhorting the Christian church to the obedience of faith, we may justly conclude an allowance, and I think a direction to consider the Hebrew ritual as a plan or sketch, a pattern, type or prophetic description of the Christian economy, and of the future good things which were reserved to be revealed at the coming of the Messiah.

If it should be inquired, how far we may consider the Hebrew ritual a typical plan of the Christian doctrines and worship, ask the ancient Prophets, ask the Apostles of Christ, ask Christ himself, the

best interpreters of the law, they will all tell you that the whole law as a ritual, that the principal parts of it, each in particular, are figures of the good things now come to us with Jesus the true Messiah. Hence such use and application of the ritual will not proceed from a vain spirit, turning all things into type and allegory, but it is authorized by the same spirit of prophecy which gave the ritual, and formed it to this design and meaning. You have seen in the ritual itself, that it consisted of three principal parts, the Presence or Shechinah, the worship, offerings, and sacrifices before the Presence, and the consecration of the Hebrew church, and rites of purification as an holy people to Jehovah. In each of these you will observe an analogy and conformity, and yet an higher perfection and greater excellency in the Christian dispensation; a subject of great and useful instruction, very far from a subject deserving contempt and mockery.

To make this more evident, and, if it may be, to excite our care to make it more useful, let us consider each of these principal parts of the ritual in particular.

The Shechinah representing the object of worship.

First, consider the most eminent part of the ritual, the divine presence in the Shechinah or glory, consider the description of it in the delineation of the ritual, and you will find it was a representation of Jehovah the true God, dwelling

among the children of Israel as their God, and blessing them as his people. This appearance of Jehovah in the most holy place, usually called the Shechinah, from the Hebrew word shacan, to dwell or inhabit, is so explained in the direction to build the sanctuary, *Let them build me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* Exod. xx. 5. Hence, also, the tabernacle itself is called mischan, or habitation.

Look over the moral instruction taught by this presence as the seat of Jehovah, the throne of the King of Israel, the kebla, the place to which the worship of the church was directed, the mercy-seat, the throne of grace, where Jehovah received and answered the prayers of his people; and finally, as the oracle which pronounced the imperial word, and gave forth those directions and commands which the church was to follow with a ready obedience. You will in this view of the Shechinah easily observe many things relating to the person, dignity, character, and design of the Messiah, and his appearance in the world, as a figurative or prophetical representation of his appearance in due time: but that here we may go on sure ground, let Prophets and Apostles lead the way.

The most general notion we have of this habitation, dwelling, tabernacling of the glory of God, in the most holy place, is to express an extraordinary, glorious, and

gracious presence of God with his people; so that the Hebrew church might truly and properly say, God was with them, and in the midst of them; that he tabernacled and dwelt among them; that they saw and beheld his glory. Observe, now, how the Prophets understood this representation of the Presence, and how the Apostles taught it when the accomplishment of the promises had more fully explained it. The Prophet Isaiah seems evidently from this representation of the Shechinah, or glory of the Presence, to give the title of Immanuel to the future Messiah: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* This prophecy St. Matthew explains in express terms of Jesus as the Messiah: *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

Isaiah, vii. 14.

Matt. i. 22, 23.

The same Prophet gives you another very distinct description of the glory or presence of Jehovah: *I saw the Lord (Jehovah) sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the*

Isaiah, vi. 1, 2, 3.

Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Here you see this glory is expressly ascribed by an Apostle to the Messiah, and that it was also designed and meant to be applied to him: *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him,* saith St. John. The Prophets manifestly allude to this glory, or presence of Jehovah in the temple, when they speak of the appearance of the Messiah in the same, or in equivalent words, by which the ritual and the Prophets express the Presence. So the Prophet Haggai: *I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts—The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.* When the desire of all nations should come, this glory was to appear in him, and in a manner yet more glorious than in the temple of old: therefore, saith St. John, when *the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled (shechinised) among us, we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The Apostle to the Hebrews further explains this glory in very expressive words, as *being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power.*

John, xii. 41.

Haggai, xi. 7—9.

John, i. 14.

Heb. i. 3.

This description represents the Messiah,

in the characters, as well as with the glory of the divine Presence in the sanctuary. From hence the Apostle teaches to infer a superior dignity, an higher authority in the Messiah: that he is highly exalted above all other beings, even the highest order of the angels of God; *being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.* The angels in the sanctuary were, by the ritual, as attendants to the Presence, waiting as servants on the glory, ready to obey the command and fulfil the will of Jehovah: therefore, *when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* And very properly are all the angels styled *ministering spirits,* when the Son is represented as sat down on the throne.

Heb. i. 4.

6.

We have a like allusion to the ritual of the Presence in another Prophet: *Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts,* saith Zechariah, in God's name; *Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.* The person designed by the man whose name is the Branch,

Zech. vi. 12, 13.

plainly means the same who is called before, the Branch, and the *righteous Branch*, which God promised he would raise to David: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name, whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness.* This man whose name is the Branch, is to bear the glory, to sit and rule upon a throne, in allusion to the throne of Jehovah, or his glory dwelling in the temple.

Zech. iii. 8.

Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

It may be proper to add one instance more, to confirm the allusion made by the Prophets to the glory or Shechinah, the principal part of the ritual: *Behold,* saith the Prophet Malachi, in the name of Jehovah, *I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.* How well does the account St. John gives of the appearance of the Messiah in the world agree with these descriptions of prophecy! *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt* (tabernacled or shechinised) *among us; and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father,* or *as God manifest in the flesh.*

Malachi, iii. 1.

John, i. 14.

1 Tim. iii. 16.

You see the whole ritual of the Presence, an useful, prophetical, or typical description of the person and character of the Messiah; the glory, the most holy place, the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, very aptly figured his appearance in the world as Immanuel, as truly *God with us*. When we see how properly the ritual is formed to be so applied, when you see the Prophets and Apostles have actually made such application, are we not warranted by sufficient authority to make the same use of the Hebrew ritual for ourselves? the great benefit of which will appear more fully presently.

The worship of the ritual applied to the worship of the Christian church.

Secondly, you see the other parts of the ritual are in like manner a prophetical description of the better state of religious worship in the Christian church, which was to be instituted at the coming of the Messiah. The Apostle to the Hebrews observes, *Then verily had the first covenant also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.* Though these ordinances were the constitutions of God himself, by Moses the prince of prophets; yet were *they but a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, which could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them till the time of reformation.*

Heb. ix. 1.

9.

10.

Many other particulars of the ritual worship, which this most skilful interpreter of the Hebrew law sets before us, mark the imperfection of the ritual, but are figures of the better things of the Christian economy, or state of religion in the church, since the appearance of the Messiah. Thus, both gifts and sacrifices were offered according to the ritual, but they were not of any avail to purge the conscience, or take away the guilt of moral sins; for *the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh.* But such purifications could go no further than to take away ritual guilt, and restore to ritual privileges, and entitle to the blessings of the ritual covenant; but they could not remove the moral guilt of sin, or do what the Mediator of the new testament was to accomplish: *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot unto God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?* Heb. ix. 13. 14.

If you attentively consider the Hebrew ritual in this view, you will observe a design and an intention of considerable use in the imperfection of the ritual itself, or, as the Apostle calls it with great judgment, the weakness and unprofitableness of the law, as making nothing perfect, that it might not be mistaken, as if it was able

of itself to do what was only to be expected from the bringing in a better hope,
Heb. vii. 18, 19. as our Apostle very justly observes, to the great honour of the Gospel economy.

My argument does not lead me to apply each particular of the ritual, but only to point out the use of it, in this design. You have seen how the Apostle to the He-
Heb. viii. 1, 2. brews himself applies it: *We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.* And it is further
6. observed: *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.* So that, in applying the ritual as a pattern of the better things in the times of the Messiah, we are to observe, first, the true meaning of the ritual; and secondly, the greater perfection of the ministry of the Christ which answers to the ritual. For instance, in the ritual there was a real priesthood—real offerings and sacrifices—real purifications—real cleansings and expiations—real blessings obtained and bestowed on those who worshipped before the Presence according to the ritual. To answer the true meaning of this ritual, the Christ was to be a real high priest—to offer a real sacrifice—to obtain real bless-

ings, and to bestow them on those who shall receive him, the Messiah, by believing on his name; for the Messiah was to be in truth what the ritual represented in figure.

The Apostle therefore reasons, that if he was to be a priest to answer the representation of the ritual, he must also have a sacrifice to offer: *For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.* Heb. viii. 3. You further observe, as this is necessary to answer the true meaning of the figure, it is also intended all these figures should be answered in a perfect manner. Thus, consider the priesthood to which the Messiah is consecrated, you will find it was not to the Aaronical order, but to the order of Melchisedec; and that *he abideth a priest continually, made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* Heb. vii. 16. Again, the priests, according to the Levitical ritual, *were made without an oath; but this, the Christ, by an oath by Him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* 21. Thus, further, the rites of purification, and of consecration to the priest's office, which the ritual directed, were answered in spirit and truth, or in the true spiritual meaning of them, as the Apostle

Heb. vii. 26, 27, 28. reasons: *For such an high priest became us as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily as those high priests to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's. For this he did once when he offered up himself; for the law maketh men high priests which have infirmities; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

On the same principles the Apostle reasons yet further to the Hebrews, that as the Christ was to offer a sacrifice, so he was to offer a better and a more perfect sacrifice than all the sacrifices of the law:

Heb. ix. 12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

In like manner our Apostle infers the greater avail and better effect of Christ's

13, 14. offering and sacrifice: *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?*

Again, from a more perfect sacrifice,

Heb. vii. 25. our Apostle argues a more powerful intercession: *Wherefore He* (Christ, our High

Priest) *is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

You observe, then, in the ritual a pattern, but an imperfect pattern, of the Mediator of the better covenant. You have an High Priest, but a greater high priest than the priests of the order of Aaron. You have a Sacrifice, but a more acceptable sacrifice, and of more efficacy, than all the sacrifices of the law. You have an Intercession, but a more powerful intercession, for much greater blessings and of everlasting continuance, as well as avail to obtain eternal redemption. These are well-known truths, of the better revelation of the better covenant, of which the Christ is Mediator. It will be of considerable use to observe the same truth taught in the ancient prophecies, and, to use the Apostle's expression, *the Holy Ghost signifying* these things, by the ancient rites of the Levitical law. Heb. ix. 8.

The ritual a plan of the more perfect Christian worship.

We are yet further to apply the Mosaical ritual, as a figurative description of the better and more perfect worship of the Christian church in the days of Messiah, as well as of his person and office as the Christ.

The times of the Messiah are so described in prophecy, as to show in general, that the state of the church and the worship of the church, were to be in those

times very different from the Hebrew ritual, and yet to be such as should answer the spiritual meaning of the ritual, or the moral doctrines and instructions taught by it.

Let it be remembered what was observed before, that the ritual taught, God was to be worshipped, that the best and most honourable worship of God did not consist in outward rites and ceremonies, but in inward temper, right and good affections, in doing justly, in loving mercy, in walking humbly with God.

Micah, vi. 8.

The whole meaning of the ritual concurred in teaching to fear, honour, and serve Jehovah, by gratitude for mercies received, hope of mercies to come, an hearty contrition for having offended God by any sin, or doing any thing evil in his sight. The Shechinah, the temple, the altar, all the sacrifices, you have seen, teach these truths; they taught that purity and holiness became the worshippers of a pure and holy God. Ritual purifications easily signified purity of mind; circumcision of the flesh, a circumcision of the heart. The many exhortations of the Prophets plainly teach this the meaning of the ritual, and recommend it as the spiritual and principal meaning of the ritual itself: so preferable is moral goodness to sacrifices, or to any other obedience to the ritual whatsoever.

All the promises of the Messiah en-

couraged an hope that in him *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed:* so the promise to Abraham; so is the promise renewed to Isaac; so again is the promise repeated to Jacob: and when the promise is limited to the tribe of Judah, it declares, *Unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* "Him shall the people obey, waiting "upon him, to observe what he shall "command them," as a learned interpreter explains it. This is a circumstance observable in all these promises, how often soever repeated, to keep in perpetual remembrance, that in the days of Messiah the church of God should be catholic, into which all people should be gathered, and in which all nations of the earth should be blessed with the privileges of the true church of the living God.

Genesis, xxii. 18. Genesis, xxvi. 3, 4. Genesis, xxviii. 13. Genesis, xlix. 10. Bishop Patrick on the place.

In the intermediate times it was necessary to raise up a particular family and people, in which the true religion should be preserved from the general corruption, by separating it from the rest of the world by a peculiar ritual, that as a wall of separation should keep them from the danger of being corrupted by the idolatry of their neighbour nations. Hence may appear the great mistake of such as find fault with the Hebrew church and law, because it was a particular revelation and not catholic, when, agreeable to the design of it, and in the very nature of things, it could

not be catholic. When the means of preservation were a separation, is it not strange reasoning to make it an objection, that there was a separation? as if in a general plague, when some persons retired to keep themselves out of the way of infection, they should be censured for not bringing all the infected along with them.

The catholic state of religion in the days of Messiah, is in like manner taken notice of and foretold by the several Prophets: thus by Isaiah, *And the gentiles shall come to thy light.* And by the Prophet Malachi; *For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord.*

Isaiah, lx. 3.

Malachi, i. 11.

It will be further proper, you should observe on this argument, that the state of the church in the days of Messiah was to be improved into a more spiritual worship; and this also the ritual taught, representing it in a figure: Christ therefore answers the question of the Samaritan woman, concerning the place of worship, a question of great consequence during the ritual; *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* It seems by the an-

John, iv. 23.

swer of the Samaritan woman, that it was a notion generally received, and acknowledged by the Samaritans as well as by the Jews, that there would be a more spiritual and perfect state of worship in the days of Messiah.

The Prophets have so explained the true meaning of these promises, that the minds of the Hebrews were prepared beforehand to perceive the accomplishment of them in due time: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,* by the Prophet Jeremiah, *that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Jerem. xxxi. 31, 32, 33.

The Apostle well explains to the Hebrews what this covenant was to be, the covenant of which the Messiah was constituted Mediator, which was established on better promises than the former. It was of great use to keep up the hopes of the promise of the Messiah, and, in particular, Heb. viii. 6.

that he was to be the Mediator of a better covenant; and this the wisdom of God was pleased to regard in the plan of the ritual itself. This was a service done even by the weakness and unprofitableness of the law, a design in the ritual not sufficiently attended to. An all-wise God could have given a law to Israel, most perfect, and without any weakness; but his wisdom having designed the most perfect law for the better times of the Messiah, he gave them a law, though best for the circumstances of that intermediate time, yet not absolutely best in itself, and therefore intimated it was in time to be changed, and to give place to a better, as the Apostle most justly observes to the He-

Heb. viii. 7, 8. brews: *For if the first covenant had been faultless, there should no place have been sought for a second. But finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.* And

Heb. vii. 19. again, as the law made nothing perfect, it kept up the expectation of a better hope that would perfect all things. This served most usefully to take them off from resting in their ritual law, as perpetual as if already perfect, when the imperfection of the law showed a more perfect was to be expected, when the promises made to them and to their forefathers should be fulfilled.

The weakness and unprofitableness of

this law was made manifest continually, as no expiations were allowed by it for moral guilt, no sacrifices were to be offered for sins committed against the moral laws of the ten commandments. The ritual continually taught the guilt of sin, and a punishment due to it: yet all the rites and sacrifices of the law could neither take away the guilt, or remove the punishment due to sins against the laws of morality. Hence it appeared that *no man is justified by the law in the sight of God.* It gives the Apostle an argument to prove, *that the just shall live by faith; for, if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law: but the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* The law declared all were guilty before God; the law allowed no sacrifice of atonement to remove such guilt; so that, in the Apostle's words, *Before faith came they were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.* A very judicious interpreter thus gives the sense of these words: "Before Christ and the "doctrine of justification by faith in him, "we Jews were shut up as a company of "prisoners together, under the custody "and inflexible rigour of the law unto the "coming of the Messiah, when the doc-

Gal. iii. 19.

21, 22.

23.

Locke on the place.

"trine of justification by him should be
Gal. iii. 24, 25. "revealed." *Wherefore the law,* adds the Apostle, *was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith: but after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster;* there is no longer need of one, to prevent our mistake, of being justified by the law, to
16, 17. preserve the faith and hope of the *promise made to Abraham and his seed* by a covenant confirmed four hundred years before the giving of the law, which the law did not, could not disanul. So that the law, from the weakness of it, taught the Hebrews to expect the accomplishment of the promises to Abraham, when they and all the nations of the earth should be
26. blessed in his seed, *and all be the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* How natural is the inference, when the law declared there was no provision made in it for the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, from the guilt of moral transgressions, to keep up the hope of God's mercies, as promised in his covenant with
6, 7. Abraham, *that even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, they should therefore know that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* This prepared the Hebrew church to receive in the fulness of time, that *Lamb of God that was appointed to take away the sins of the world,*

in whom they and all nations of the earth should be fully blessed. The ritual, you have seen, had a spiritual meaning and moral instruction, and so taught, that the honourable and acceptable worship of God was not in the observation of outward ceremonies, but in what those rites and ceremonies signified, that is, in the love and fear of God, in believing his promises, trusting in his faithfulness, acknowledging the evil and guilt of sin, the holiness and justice of God, with an heart truly penitent, and a sincere endeavour to break off our sins, to amend our ways and our doings. They could not rightly understand the true meaning and design of the Presence, temple, altar, sacrifices, without considering the frame and temper of mind, with which they signified God was to be served and worshipped.

This is the truth and spirit of the law: it showed what was fit to be received into every economy or state of religion, and what would well become the best state of the church in the times of Messiah. Did it not then teach beforehand, that in the days of Messiah God should be worshipped in spirit and truth, with that true spirit of rational devotion which the ceremonies of the ritual taught and recommended? that the Christian church should be an holy nation in reality and truth, and become so by the *washing of regeneration and re-*

newing of the Holy Ghost? It is most evident, the ritual, in strict reasoning, is fitted to teach the worship of God in spirit and truth; it is very plain, Prophets and Apostles, the best interpreters of the ritual, have so understood it; is there not reason, then, to conclude, that the wisdom of God did so design it? Such a design ought greatly to recommend it to our esteem.

If, however, it should still be said, What great advantage had the Hebrew church from so dark a representation of a future state of religion? did the Hebrews so understand this spiritual meaning of their ritual as to make any use of it worthy the wisdom of a revelation? it is thought by some a shrewd question, and which is not to be answered easily. That we may therefore preserve our esteem for a law in which there appears so manifold wisdom of God, let it be considered more distinctly.

It is first to be observed, that what was prefigured of the times of the Messiah, either in the ancient prophecies, or types of the ritual, was, in the Apostle Peter's just account of it, *as a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* Yet, dark as it was, it gave some light, and such as was of great advantage to the principal ends designed by it, and for which a fuller light was not necessary.

2 Pet. i. 19.

It will be little to our purpose to inquire how far the Hebrew nation in general did actually understand their own ritual, and what it taught concerning the person of the Messiah, his character and office. It is more to the purpose to consider how it might have been understood, if they had rightly applied themselves to the understanding of it. This question receives an easy answer, by observing how it was understood, and what helps they had from the Prophets to understand it.

Great use, while the ritual continued.

A general understanding of the ritual was of great use, while that intermediate state of religion was to continue. It is not easy to say how far persons of serious attention, good understanding, and pious minds, might go in discovering the more secret meaning of their rites and ceremonies. The mysteries of hieroglyphics, and instruction by symbols, in use among their neighbours, became a part of study and science, and they learned many things by them, not obvious to common observation. The moral meaning of sacrifices, for instance, was of easy understanding; why might not the Hebrews, from a general understanding of that part of the ritual, be taught to expect a greater high priest, better sacrifices, a better covenant, better promises and blessings in the times of the Messiah, who was to perfect all things wanting in their law, and when their own

ritual showed its own weakness, that *it could not take away sin?* It was, however, of great use to keep up a reverence for their law, as a very proper intermediate state of religion, till the promises should be fulfilled. It was a sufficient answer to all objections, that God, the God of their fathers, who had promised the Messiah, had given them an intermediate law, that he would protect and bless them, in obedience to their law, till the coming of the Messiah, who should then perfect all things. The hope of a Messiah to come, and who was to teach them all things, was an useful motive to their steadfast attachment to that ritual, which God had appointed an intermediate state of religion, and preparatory to a better.

Of important use to prepare men to receive the Messiah. Malachi, iii. 1.

It was further of very important use to prepare the minds of men to know the Messiah, and to receive him as *the messenger of the covenant, when he should come to his temple.* The whole world, as well as the Hebrew nation, was concerned to receive God's Anointed, and their Saviour, when he should appear in the fulness of time. The wisdom of God, which foresaw what prejudices would indispose men's minds to receive him; that the preaching of Jesus the Christ, would be *to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness,* prepared a remedy beforehand; and, in forming the Hebrew

1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

ritual, a plan preparatory to the revelation of the Gospel, has made a wise provision to remove the prejudices, both of Jews and gentiles, and to prepare both to receive the Messiah when they should see his authority confirmed by such attestations of prophecy.

Observe what were the actual prejudices of the Jews against Jesus as the Messiah, and this design of the law will appear of more important use. Instead of receiving him as the promised seed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed, they actually rejected him, charged his doctrines with blasphemy, and his claim to the character of the Messiah with imposture. The whole nation persecuted him to death as a false prophet. Even such as were convinced he was the Messiah, and professed themselves his disciples, were prejudiced against several doctrines he taught, which they imagined derogated from the perfection and honour of their law. Such was the doctrine of making the church catholic, by receiving the gentiles into the privileges of the true church, without submitting to the ritual law, and of not being justified by the works of the law, but by faith in the Messiah. Whoever observes that these were the principal points of debate in the first ages of the church; that almost all the writings of the New Testament refer

to them; that the Apostles, in particular St. Paul, remove these prejudices by showing how the law itself prepared them to receive these doctrines, as truths within the meaning and intention of the law itself—will easily see of what use the law was to prepare them for the appearance of the Christ. The shadows of the good things to come would well attest the reality of the things themselves when compared with them. Thus the doctrine of an Immanuel, *God manifest in the flesh*, would not appear an unaccountable doctrine, when they compared their Shechinah, Jehovah in his glory dwelling between the cherubim, with the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in the Messiah. Nor would the prejudices in favour of their law, as unchangeable and eternal, or as necessary means of justifying a sinner before God, have had any great weight with them, when they duly considered the weakness and unprofitableness of their law, and that it had not one offering or sacrifice that could atone for moral guilt, or justify a sinner against the moral law.

Nor would they have had such prejudices against taking down the middle wall of partition between them and the world, and bringing all nations into one catholic church, if they had considered it was one principal character of the Messiah, that he was to appear the blessing of all nations,

as well as the glory of his people Israel; that, though the ritual was necessary as a wall of partition to separate them from the world for a time, yet in the better times of Messiah *the name of God was to be great among the gentiles; incense was to be offered to his name, and a pure offering; For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts* by the Prophet. Malachi, i. 11.

The whole plan of their ritual showed, that it was not designed to be a ritual for a catholic church; that it was so planned, that it could not possibly serve for such an use. This prepared them to expect a change of worship, when the church should become catholic, such as should be fit and proper, and such as only could be fit and proper, for the use of a catholic church. Of what service was it thus to prepare the minds of the Hebrews to receive without prejudice the doctrines and worship of the Christian church, as taught and appointed by the Messiah in his kingdom! to prepare them for so great a change and alteration, as what their own law prefigured and foretold, as one great blessing of the Messiah's appearance! This is a just and good way of reasoning from prophecy, the very way in which the Apostles explain the Prophets, and argue from them, that Jesus was the Christ, in whom the law and the Prophets were ful-

filled. Let men call this typical, or allegorical reasoning, or by what other name soever they shall please, it will nevertheless remain sound and true reasoning, and give satisfaction to a mind honestly disposed to discern the truth.

With this view there is little need of an apology for any part of the Hebrew ritual, to which men object, supposing they might have been better, as truth and reality would have been preferable to types and figures. If by such objections they mean only that the ritual was not in itself the most perfect institution possible, they say nothing to the purpose; but if they say it was not on the whole the best to answer the wise and good ends designed by it, then their objections, upon a fair review of the ritual, will be found false in fact. Even the weakness and imperfection of the law itself were of great service in teaching them to hope for a better covenant, and in preparing them for the good things that were to come with the Messiah.

Of service to the gentiles to confirm their faith in Jesus, as the Messiah.

As the Hebrew ritual was of such service to the Hebrews themselves, it was also of great service to the gentiles who were called to the privileges of the true church by believing Jesus to be the Messiah. It has been observed before, from a judicious author, "that neither the prophecies con-" cerning the Messiah, nor the prophetical

"descriptions of the times of the Messiah "(in the Mosaical ritual or other prophe- "cies) were primary arguments for the "conversion of a gentile, nor were they "ever used by the Apostles as such. The "gentiles did not believe in Christ, be- "cause foretold by the Prophets, as the "Jews did; yet they believed the Pro- "phets, because they had so exactly fore- "told Christ Jesus. They were called "from idols to the acknowledgment of "the true God; from iniquity to the prac- "tice of virtue, by setting before them "Christ Jesus a preacher of righteousness, "and the appointed Judge of the world, "under the confirmation of many signs "and wonders, wrought by God for this "purpose: being so far established, they "were led back to review this wonderful "scene of providence, as it stood in the "ancient prophecies" (of which their ritual was a principal part); "and with "them the authority of the prophecies "stood mainly upon the exact completion "that was before their eyes. From the "authority of the prophecies so establish- "ed, they understood the past workings "of Providence, and the state of the world, "and came to see that Christ was not only "the Judge, but the Redeemer of mankind. "To the Jew prophecy was the first proof, "to the gentile it was the last."

Bp. Sherlock of Prophecy, p. 179, 182, 183.

This opened a view to the gentiles of

very useful instruction, and which greatly confirmed their faith in Jesus, as the Messiah. Some doctrines of the Christian faith did not so perfectly agree with the philosophy to which they had addicted themselves, or with several maxims to which they had in a manner resigned their understandings: but when the doctrines of Christianity were reviewed in the light of the Hebrew law and prophecies, they appear to be neither new nor strange doctrines, but only a fuller and a clearer manifestation of what was in the design of Providence for so many ages before. As the Jews were prepared betimes to acknowledge their new Lawgiver, and to give up their ancient ritual to his more perfect rule of worship; so the gentiles, when they came to see the authority of the Hebrew law and Prophets, were prepared to acknowledge the gospel of Christ the last, the best, the most perfect state of religion: that Jesus, as the Christ, was the minister of a better covenant, established on better promises, conferring better blessings, of which all the promises and blessings of the Hebrew law and ritual, though of divine authority, were only a typical and figurative representation: of such excellent use was the ritual, even as a shadow of better things to come.

Consider then the Hebrew ritual in its whole system, and not partially in one or

other of its particular laws singled out as most liable to objection; consider it as designed and formed to answer many useful ends, all of them of great service to the state of the church and world at that time; apply the Hebrew ritual to these uses, observe carefully how it answered the great ends of religion, the true knowledge of the one true God, in a worship honourable and acceptable to him; and how well it improved the mind in virtue and real goodness, the true perfection and happiness of the soul. Consider it further as a wise and most effectual means to prevent the great and most dangerous progress of idolatry, which threatened the extirpation of all true religion, and with it the true principles of virtue, out of the world. Observe, once more, of what great use this ritual was, to prepare the minds of all men, gentiles as well as Jews, for the more perfect state of a catholic church, when, in the fulness of time, the promised Messiah should come; and I think you may find great reason to justify and admire this constitution as an instance of great wisdom and goodness in God, of great favour to the family of Abraham, and of universal advantage to all the nations of the earth, when the mystery of Christ was revealed, that *the gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same* Ephes. iii. 6.

body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel.

See, then, the use we may yet make of it, to help us to a fuller understanding of the principal peculiar doctrines of Christianity, by an explication of easy meaning and of highest authority, and to confirm our faith in the belief of those doctrines attested to by the law and the prophets in ancient times, as well as revealed in these last days, by Jesus, God's own Son, the true Messiah.

I shall therefore finish this argument with the words of a great author:

"That we may form a right judgment "of the Mosaical law, many things are "to be considered and spoken of in order. "We are principally to take notice of "what was mentioned by us before, that "this law is built on the same founda- "tions on which the best laws are. "The law of nature, the innate, eternal "principles of the human mind, and the "duties arising towards God and men, by "the nature of things; these Moses has "shortly and clearly delivered in the Ten "Commands, to which he has subjected "all his ritual and secondary laws. It is "moreover to be observed, that Moses "had it not in his intention to give a law "most perfect in its own nature, but a "law most fit and useful for the circum- "stances of time and place; nor did he

"propose an universal law for the whole "world, but only for the one people of "Israel; nor, finally, was it a law to con- "tinue for ever, but only to the times of "the Messiah. If you weigh these things "in your minds, there will be no need of "an apology, or of my defence: let us "rather praise and admire this great man, "the wisest lawgiver, and the greatest "prophet of God; illustrious in all kinds "of miracles; whom Egypt, the seat of "learning, saw long since, and was "astonished at his triumphs over her "priests and divines; who has since been "the praise of all nations, whom Christ "called from heaven a witness of his "glory. These shall be thy praises, thou "prince of Prophets; these the monu- "ments of thy glory, as long as the hea- "vens and earth shall endure *."

* Interea, ut æquum feramus judicium de lege Mosaica, multa sunt expendenda et dicenda suo ordine. Illud imprimis notandum, quod supra diximus, eodem solido niti fundamento hanc legem, quo leges optimæ: nimirum jure naturali, innatis et eternis animi humani principiis et rationibus, debitisque ex natura rerum, erga Deum, et erga homines officiis. Hæc in decalogo breviter et dilucide complexus est Moses. Atque his subjecit reliqua omnia suæ legis ritualia, atque jura secundaria. Præterea notandum, non id in consiliis habuisse Mosem, ut legem conderet sua natura perfectissimam, sed aptissimam, et utilissimam pro ratione loci et temporis. Dein non id sibi proposuit, ut esset lex universalis totius terræ, sed unius populi Israelitici, neque denique lex in perpetuum duratura, sed usque ad

In a word, a law so wisely planned, a ritual serving so many excellent uses, does not stand in need of an apology, but only to put a stop to unreasonable prejudice. It deserves esteem and commendation from a discerning, wise, and truly honest mind.

tempora Messiæ. Hæc si tecum perpenderis, non erit opus, apologia aut patrocinio nostro. Laudemus potius et admiremur, virum illum maximum, legislatorem consultissimum, summumque Dei prophetam, omne genus miraculis splendescentem; quem vidit olim, et obstupuit Ægyptus literatorum sedes, triumphantem in suos magos et hierophantas, quem omnes deinceps gentes celebrarunt, quem denique cœlo deductum, testem suæ gloriæ adscivit Christus. Hæ tibi erunt laudes, prophetarum princeps, hæc monumenta tuæ gloriæ, donec cœli et terra manseriut incolumes.—*Burnet de Fide Chris.* 34, 35.

THE END.

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